

## Just in Time – Chapter 1

Russia invaded Georgia and then withdrew. It was at the top of the news for at least a week and relegated to the second page after the withdrawal began. I had Guard over the weekend and it was all the talk. If Bush decided to send troops to Georgia, about all he had left was the National Guard. I hoped he didn't since I'd be out in 3 months, early November.

Russia seemed to be poised for something, maybe an inroad into the Ukraine. Most likely Saakashvili, who studied in the United States, is counting on American intervention, since he has already asked for American help. But it is questionable whether an America already deeply engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan is willing to confront Russia militarily. A senior state department official indirectly indicated this, telling the New York Times *There is no possibility of drawing NATO or the international community into this.*

But there is another reason besides current political ones that prompted the Kremlin's military action. By invading Georgia, Russia is also following its age-old historical pattern. When Moscow is weak, as it was after 1917 and in 1991, the states on its periphery break away. But when the center is strong, as it is again becoming now, it sets out to reincorporate those very same peripheral states. "Georgia is only the start," said Saakashvili in an interview with a German newspaper six weeks ago. "Tomorrow the Baltic states, then Poland."

If we went head-to-head with the Russians it could eventually lead to a Global Thermo-nuclear War (GTW). My first sergeant was pushing me to reenlist.

"Jed, it's more important now than ever. We're fighting two wars and don't really have the troops for a third. The reenlistment bonus is up to \$2,000 a year so you'd have quite a bit of money if you reupped for 6 years."

"Sergeant, I've done a tour in Kosovo and one in Iraq. I've done my part and Patty and I are getting married. I have a farm to take care of. Thanks, but no thanks, I'm getting out."

He continued for every drill until my time was up and my answer was always the same or some variation. I had gotten the promotion and Patty and I had set a date. Besides, it wasn't about the money, every dime I'd earned from the Guard had gone into the fund I called my kiss my butt money. I had the fund for the sole purpose of preparations and had spent a portion already. I'd spent it at Walton Feed and purchased 4 1-year deluxe food supplies, a Country Living Mill, an oat roller and water barrels to store 500 gallons of water.

I lived alone on the farm because Mom and Dad had gotten divorced years ago and he hadn't remarried. This past fall, he had a heart attack and died. Being the only child, I got the farm and his large insurance policy. Large, not huge, it was only \$50,000. Since I didn't need the money, it went into my kiss my butt account. I had talked Patty into

coming out and raising this year's garden. Her only stipulation was that I buy a 41 quart All American Canner, several cases of jars and a case or two of lids.

The small room in the basement that Dad had always called the fruit cellar wasn't large enough to hold all of the jars and I did a bit of remodeling when I had the time. I tripled the size of the room and installed homemade cabinets with latching doors so jars couldn't fall off the shelves. The shelf spacing allowed half gallon jars on the bottom row, quarts in several middle rows and pints on the top two rows. The cabinets went from the floor to the ceiling. The ladder stood in the corner.

The stove in the basement was wood/coal fired and the furnace the same. The basement had a large coal room that at times contained coal, wood or corn cobs. My small farm, 160 acres, was labor intensive. For example, I had a four row corn planter and a mounted two row corn picker. The combine was an old pull type and was beginning to be hard to get parts for. There was a John Deere A and a Ford NAA.

While the equipment was old, it did the job it was intended to do and when something broke, more often than not, I could fix it myself. I had a small stockpile of hard to find parts, blades for the mower, ledger plates and an assortment of spare bearings. Dad had a sickle bar sharpener so I didn't have to pull the sickle bar and take it to town.

We milked 10 shorthorns, raised 4 litters of pigs twice a year and had 2 mules and 3 saddle horses. Dad's hobby had been collecting antique farm equipment and that's why he had the mules, to pull it. The mules were broken to harness and saddle and while mules didn't run, they set a fast walking pace.

There was just too much work for an individual on the farm but not enough to justify a full time hired hand. Patty was a farm girl and could pick up some of the slack. She could even handle the milking if I was busy in the field. I wouldn't arm wrestle with her because handling the milk buckets wasn't easy, they could weigh up to 60 pounds or more.

A month after my enlistment was up, we were married and we began planning on a response to the growing uncertainty I felt we were facing. It was time to get into my kiss my butt money. I had a Winchester 94 .30-30 and a Winchester model 62A .22 rifle. Dad's pistol was an original Ruger Standard .22 with the Red emblem. His old shotgun was a Winchester model 12 in 12-gauge. I had made a list of the firearms I wanted based on what I'd seen in Iraq and Kosovo.

Rifle: M14; Shotgun: 590A1; and, Pistol: M1911. And since we're married, times two. Therein came that special account, the kiss my butt money. We went to the gun store together and worked the guy over the coals. We listed what we wanted and told him it was either 10% off the MSRP or we'd go elsewhere. He wrote the list down and got on his computer terminal before he had an answer. Was it cash? Yes. Were we sure we didn't want anything else?

“What do you have in mind?”

“I also sell Barrett rifles.”

“I’ve seen those when I was in Iraq. Aren’t they quite expensive?”

“Well, by the time you buy the rifle, extra magazines, the scope and ammunition, I make a reasonable profit; if you’d be interested in their model M82, I think we might have a deal.”

“What do you think, dear?”

“If we had one, we could cover the entire farm, right?”

“Not quite but it would be close.”

“Do you have the money?”

“We do.”

“Then I think we can talk about and make a decision, just not today.”

We ended up with a pair of PT1911s with 6 extra magazines each, a pair of Mossberg 590A1s with the ghost ring sights, metal trigger guard, heavy barrel and speed stock, a pair of Springfield Armory M1A Loaded and 25 magazines each. Since we had the funds and were getting a 10% discount, we bought 20 cases of the Hornady A-MAX for the .50 cal. When we got home, I started checking around for 7.62x51mm surplus and Aim Surplus was advertising the South African.

“You have the South African on your website, how much do you have left?”

“Only a few cans.”

“How few?”

“Eleven.”

“I’ll take it all, do you take Amex?”

“No, we take Visa, Mastercard and Discover.”

“How about a bank wire?”

“We can do that. You want this shipped UPS?”

“I’d prefer motor freight, UPS is too expensive.”

“I’ll have to check on that, give me your number and I’ll call you back.”

“I’m going to need your ABA and account number to transfer the funds.”

“I put a hold on the ammo, you name is?”

“Jed Rollins.”

The ammo cost on the order of \$3,846.15, plus shipping. The gun dealer was our best source for shotgun shells and we bought 4 cases of 00 buckshot and two cases of Brenneke slugs. It ran about \$175 a case with tax. We went to Wally World and stocked up on bricks of .22 ammo. I bought Speer Lawman and Speer Gold Dot from Am-moman, 2,000-rounds of Lawman and 1,000-rounds of Gold Dot, both were 230 grain.

“Ok, why not the Barrett?”

“Is it the only .50 caliber sniper rifle made?”

“I think there must be a dozen different brands, why?”

“Have you checked the other brands out?”

“Not really.”

“Do so with an open mind and if you still want that Barrett, get it.”

“Fair enough.”

With the balance of the kiss my butt money falling Patty suggested we acquire several radiation measuring instruments. We used KI4U and started with The Package. We added 3 additional CD V-742s, a CD V-700 and a CD V-717. We ordered an AMP 200 from Arrow Tech Inc. up in North Dakota, all the while reserving the money for the .50 cal rifle.

We bought KIO<sub>3</sub> from Frugal because he had the best price. With the remaining un-committed thirty grand, we contracted for construction of an above the ground fallout shelter. It consisted of an inner row of blocks and an outer row of blocks and the empty space in between was filled with 6’ of compacted soil. The roof was a 6” thick slab of poured concrete supported by used 1” road plate and the entire shelter was covered with 6’ of additional soil. The air system came from American Safe Room and cost \$3,600 while the blast door cost \$3,295. The automatic ventilation blower ran an additional \$595. They also all but broke the bank, leaving only the rifle money.

“Pick a rifle yet?”

“More or less. It won’t be a whole lot cheaper than the Barrett, but it includes several accessories that Barrett sells separately. It’s bolt action, not semi-auto. It includes a good scope and an upgrade for a nominal amount. If we buy the package, we’d get about \$830 worth accessories free. The selling point is the accuracy. The manufacturer guarantees 0.5 MOA or better. It’s the McMillan Tac-50 and the official sniping rifle for Canadian forces.”

“Sounds like you found something better than the Barrett. You held the money back, so go for it. Now, what are we going to do about cooking, food storage and the like in the shelter?”

“I searched the internet and found military surplus bunks. That should do for sleeping. I saw an ad for a used electric stove in the paper and that should do for cooking. We’ll need a used refrigerator and a freezer too. I thought maybe we could bolt a rifle rack on the wall to hold the rifles and shotguns. When we get the money from selling the hogs, I believe we should buy a ham radio and install an antenna. We need to start double buying food when we get groceries.”

“There’s not much available here in Perry but there are both a Sam’s Club and Costco in West Des Moines.”

“Make up a list and we’ll go as soon as the check clears.”

Patty was a very good cook. Before we got married, she had me sit down and tell her what I liked and what I disliked. She said that she liked some of the things that I disliked, but if she prepared them, she’d make a separate dish for me. There were also things that I liked that she disliked and she do the same thing if that happened. If you get hungry enough, food is food, unless it’s broccoli or cauliflower or liver.

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We sold 30 hogs at 80¢ a pound with an average weight of 240 pounds, giving us \$5,760 to spend on stocking the shelves and adding the ham gear. The MFJ 1798 antenna cost \$290, and I found a source for telescoping masts that also sold standoffs. I got a used Kenwood TS2000 to round out our radio equipment. We spent a bundle at Sam’s Club and Costco. Using Patty’s carefully developed list for one month, we multiplied by 12 and bought a year’s worth of everything. The freezer was empty and we had the room to store a full beef and two hogs. Since we ate more bacon and ham than we got from two hogs, we bought extra at the store. Other things we stocked up on were butter and cheese, which went into the freezer.

Although Russia had pulled out of Georgia, they hadn’t pulled out of South Ossetia. In fact, the province was packed with troops. I had it mind that before this was over, Russia would do its level best to bring the USSR countries back into the fold. Initially established as a union of four Soviet Socialist Republics, the USSR grew to contain 15 constituent or *union republics* by 1956: Armenian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, Byelorussian SSR,

Estonian SSR, Georgian SSR, Kazakh SSR, Kirghiz SSR, Latvian SSR, Lithuanian SSR, Moldavian SSR, Russian SFSR, Tajik SSR, Turkmen SSR, Ukrainian SSR, and Uzbek SSR.

I assumed that since they were in the Georgia area, they'd start in the south and eventually move to the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Georgia was part of the Caucasus with consisted of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and southern parts of Russia and includes the disputed territories of Abkhazia, Chechnya, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

So far, all that Bush had done was send the Secretary of State to discuss the matter with the French and the Georgians. It brings to mind that old children's saw, *Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me*. A bit idealistic if you ask me; why should the Russians listen, they'd totally ignored us so far.

"If we have World War Three, it will be your fault."

"How do you figure Patty?"

"Nobody would dare to start it before we had the shelter completed. We built it just in time."

"Are your hormones out of whack?"

"They're perfectly normal for a pregnant woman."

"What! Why didn't you tell me?"

"I just did. I went to the doctor today and he confirmed it."

I couldn't imagine what she'd look like with a big belly. Patty was 5'4, 105 pounds dripping wet. She wore her hair in a short haircut, a pageboy? I was about 5'10 and 145 pounds, sort of slim with a body mass index of just under 21. You could tell she watched her weight, her BMI was about 18. Body mass equals weight times 703 and the result divided by the square of your height in inches. Anything less than 18 may indicate an eating disorder.

I was 26 and Patty was 25 so it was time to start our family. The local hospital was the Dallas County Hospital. Over dinner we talked and decided that we'd both enroll in an advanced first aid class. When we went to sign up later, I ended up enrolled in a first responder class because of my combat lifesaver status. When we sold the corn and soybeans, we bought a used freezer and refrigerator for the shelter. We were down to the big one, the generator. We could have bought one heck of generator for the money we spent on the Tac-50 and I was tempted to sell it.

However, we sold 28 head of beef and had about thirty five grand to spend on that project. We spent half of it on a Cummins DGBB; rated at 32kw prime power, it put out over 100 amps at 240v and used from 1.2 to 2.7gph of diesel fuel. We shopped for a used diesel tank for several weeks until we came up with the largest we could find a 5,000-gallon tank. We spent most of the remaining fifteen grand on biodiesel that we got for ~\$1.50 a gallon.

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Most of the land around Perry is flat as a pancake. The soil is rich and a person can grow a crop using only manure and crop rotation. We grew corn and soybeans and a small permanent field of alfalfa. There were 155 arable acres with fifteen in hay and 70 in each corn and soybeans. I was counting on Patty to help with the harvest. She could tow the wagon to the homestead and elevate the grain into one of the two silos we had. Each held 12,000 bushels of grain and would hold all of most of the corn, depending on the yield and all of the soybeans. The wagons had hydraulic lifts and tailgates so it was easy to unload a wagon.

I know that I must sound as cold as an ice cube. I'm not really that way, but most days by the time I finish the chores and working in the field, I'm too tired to look at some of these things in any kind of positive light. Try to understand we can't all be little Miss Sunshine all of the time. I didn't consider myself to be a prepper; I'm flat out a survivalist. If the government pushed too hard, I'd be willing to participate in an insurrection if anyone had the cojones to start one; otherwise, I simply didn't have the time.

During dinner Patty asked, "Do we have room in the shelter for my parents?"

"We have the room, but don't have enough beds. I could try to get two more of those surplus military bunks."

"Mom and Dad would reimburse you. How much did they cost?"

"\$350 plus shipping for a bunk bed set with 2 4"-thick foam mattresses."

"They seem to be narrow."

"They're standard 30" bunks. Make sure they'll come before I order them."

"She told me to ask, they'll come."

"What does your father have for weapons?"

"He has a Winchester Speed pump 12-gauge shotgun and model 70 bolt-action .30-06."

"I'd much rather he had a M1A, even if it were the standard model."

“I’ll tell them but I don’t know how he will feel about a rifle as expensive as a M1A. Are you going to keep them out without one?”

“Of course not, but if he sticks with the .30-06, he’d better buy some extra ammunition.”

As it was, everything we had, except for the shelter, could be justified as being a necessity for the farm and was treated as such. Perhaps the shelter could be justified because we didn’t have a storm shelter and this was tornado country.

Russia said it could reconsider its participation in efforts to pressure Iran over controversial nuclear activities if the United States continued to support Georgia in the conflict between components of the former Soviet Union. None of the pressure they’d put on Iran had done one bit of good. In fact, didn’t they threatened to attack the US and Israel if either country bombed Iran?

“I thought they withdrew.”

“They did, they pulled back about a mile outside of Gori.”

Washington hawks insist that the remedy to Russia's military humiliation of Georgia is to expedite the smaller country's incorporation into NATO. After all, Moscow might think twice about attacking any nation able to trigger the Atlantic Alliance's Article 5, which obliges all member states to respond militarily to an attack on any one of them. President Bush, in fact, toured Europe last spring to stump aggressively for Georgia and Ukraine to be granted Membership Action Plans, the first step towards joining the Alliance. But despite Bush's high-profile campaigning, the proposal was rebuffed at NATO's April summit by 10 member states, led by key US allies Germany and France. That rebuff, said Republican presidential nominee Senator John McCain, “might have been viewed as a green light by Russia for its attacks on Georgia,” and he urged European NATO members to “revisit the decision.”

But many of the Europeans draw the opposite conclusion. They see last week’s events in Georgia as vindicating their caution over granting Georgia NATO membership. Indeed, many in Europe see the Bush Administration’s military support for Georgia and its trumpeting of Tbilisi’s cause in NATO as having emboldened President Mikheil Saakashvili to launch his reckless attack on South Ossetia.

If Russia's brutal response to Georgia’s provocation had, in fact, obliged NATO to intervene, the Atlantic Alliance itself might have faced a terminal crisis. Most of its member states have no enthusiasm for confronting a resurgent Russia in the Caucasus, traditionally a Russian sphere of influence. The Alliance, for one thing, is having enough trouble maintaining 71,000 troops in Afghanistan, where they are only managing to tread water against mounting odds. Other arguments against confrontation: much of Western Europe is wholly dependent on Russian energy supplies, and European negotiators believe there is little chance of a diplomatic solution to the Iran nuclear standoff without committed support from Moscow.



So, regardless of the appeals of Senator McCain – and his Democratic opponent, Senator Barack Obama – the events of the past week have more likely placed Georgia's NATO membership in the deep freeze for the foreseeable future, even if the Alliance remains rhetorically committed to the idea in principle. If so, Moscow can count what has transpired as a major victory: it has prevented the advance of a rival military alliance into Russia's backyard.

Russia's very purpose in its *punishment* of Georgia has been to warn neighbors inclined to challenge Moscow from under a Western security umbrella that if a storm is provoked, that umbrella offers precious little protection. The conflict was never simply about Georgia and its restive minority regions; it was always about NATO, and the regional balance of power between Russia and the US.

Putin has used the opportunity presented by Saakashvili to show Russia's neighbors that Washington's tough talk could not be matched by any meaningful response to the Kremlin's military campaign. Bush may now be trying to play catch-up with his tough talk, but reversing the impact of the Russian offensive will require a lot more than stitching up a bloodied Georgia and casting Russia out of the G-8 or boycotting the Winter Olympics. (Thursday's announcement of a deal between the US and Poland to station missile interceptors on Russia's doorstep over increasingly bellicose objections from Moscow may have been timed to signal resolve in the face of Russian aggression, but that plan was in the works long before the Georgia showdown, and is unlikely to have any effect on the Georgia situation.)

When NATO holds its last summit of the Bush presidency in December, the symbolic language may remain soothingly supportive of membership for Georgia, but don't expect to see it granted a Membership Action Plan. Indeed, the events of the past week have called into question the very purpose of NATO and its relationship with Russia. While many Western critics declared the Russian action of the past week a reversion to Cold War tactics, Moscow sees NATO itself as a Cold War relic. The Russians complain that following the demise of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Treaty Organization, the US reneged on promises to create a new global security order and instead moved to expand its own Cold War military alliance – NATO – into Moscow's own sphere of influence.

NATO's very purpose had been to contain the Soviet Union in the wake of World War II. The Red Army had just broken the back of Hitler's Wehrmacht and put Moscow in control of the Baltic States (annexed at the outset of the war), Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. Having watched Central Europe transformed by Soviet military power into a patchwork of authoritarian vassal states, Western Europe was only too willing to join an all-for-one military alliance with the US and Canada to even up the odds in the event of further Soviet expansionism. Nor was it surprising that, decades later, those Europeans who had actually lived under the Soviet heel would race to join the same alliance at the first opportunity. The anti-Moscow military alliance not only remained intact in the decade after the Cold War, but advanced

towards Russia's shrinking borders. Russians saw all of that as strategic encirclement with hostile intent.

Last month, General Norton Schwartz, nominated as chief of the US Air Force, told his confirmation hearing that the US needed to send a warning to Moscow in the wake of Russian media reports claiming that Moscow was weighing the deployment of nuclear-capable bombers in Cuba, in response to US missile defense installations in Poland and the Czech Republic. The Russians should be told that moving bombers to Cuba *crosses a red line for the United States of America*, he said. Let's just say that the Russian military brass have long felt the same way about Ukraine and Georgia being militarily integrated into a rival alliance.

Russia could do little to stem NATO's advance during the economic and social collapse presided over by Boris Yeltsin. But Putin's Russia, flush with petrodollars, has reemerged as a geopolitical player at the same time as US influence has been waning. With the bloodletting in Georgia, the Russians are telling Europe that the current security architecture is dysfunctional – a message Moscow sent earlier in the year through a vague proposal to replace NATO with a pan-European security structure in which Russia was an equal partner.

In Washington and in many former Soviet satellite states, the response to the Georgia debacle will be to continue NATO's eastward expansion and stiffen its resolve to contain a resurgent Russia. But in Western Europe, there will be growing doubts over the value of a security system built upon a structure designed to isolate and contain Russia. The problem, of course, is that NATO operates strictly by consensus, and in the absence of such consensus, paralysis may set in. Indeed, it may yet emerge that Putin's campaign in the Caucasus has succeeded not only in keeping Georgia out of NATO, but in dealing a body blow to the Alliance itself.

"Defense Secretary Robert Gates warned Thursday that if Russia doesn't pull back from its fighting in Georgia it could hurt Moscow-Washington relations *for years to come*."

"I'll bet they're quaking in their boots, get real will you."

"That exactly what he said Patty. In contrast to the tough talk, Condoleezza Rice rushed to the former Soviet republic with a new cease-fire plan offering concessions to Moscow. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he saw no need to invoke American military force in the nearly week-old war, despite continued uncertainty about Russia's next move."

Patty's father's name was John and her mother's name Phyllis. Patty had one sister, Rachael, who lived in Denver, Colorado. Rachael was 5 years older than Patty. BTW, it was Patricia, but she never used it. The only person who did was Phyllis and only when she disagreed with Patty.

## Just in Time – Chapter 2

“Patty, check this out.”

“What channel are you on?”

“The Military Channel. This is one of those old cold war movies they made. Listen to what they’re saying about the USSR.”

“There hasn’t been a USSR for years.”

“I know that’s why this movie is so unusual. Look at that shot, hundreds of Russian soldiers coming down a field carrying Mosin-Nagant bolt action rifles.”

“I thought they adopted the AK in 1947.”

“They did, although it wasn’t totally adopted until 1949. Due to manufacturing problems they didn’t issue many of the AKs until 1956. In 1959 they introduced the AKM and by 1978 they had completed replacing their AKMs with AK-74s.”

“So they’re using a .22 like we are?”

“Essentially yes.”

“But you don’t like the .22s we use.”

“Right, I want whoever I shoot to stay down when they’re hit.”

“Is that why I have to get kicked to death? So you don’t have to worry about the person you shoot getting up?”

“You don’t like the M1A?”

“I like it; it just has too much recoil for a little thing like me.”

“What would you rather have, a .22?”

“Yes, an AR-15.”

“I’ll consider buying you a .223 but I won’t buy you an AR-15; how about a HK416?”

“What’s that?”

“Well, it looks like a fancy AR-15 but it isn’t.”

“What’s different?”

“It has a gas piston so the action stays clean. Other than that, it pretty much looks like an AR-15 on steroids. Is that what you want?”

“Would it be too much trouble?”

“Not at all, I’ll see what I can do,” I lied through my teeth.

I wouldn’t buy her an AR if it were the only rifle available. Just when you need to depend on them, they jam, double feed, fail to eject or fail to extract. I had an M4 in the sandbox and I was cured. The HK416 had 1 turn in 7” and could use heavy bullets. The MR556 rifle was hard to find and expensive (~\$3,500) when I did. I sold the soybeans to pay for it. I used the money that John repaid me with some of ours to buy M193 from Am-moman on stripper clips. I had a box full of used M16 magazines that just needed new springs.

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It also solved the question of John having an M1A because we had two and Patty wouldn’t use hers. With all of our production sold, the bills paid and a little money in the bank, I started to think about next planting season. I had more time to follow what was going on in Georgia, too. The Russians were there to stay, no doubt about that. I picked up a good used Colt .45 so John had a man’s pistol.

“Have you read this new story on Frugal’s?”

“What’s the title?”

“Threatcon Delta.”

“Threatcon Delta is the highest state of alert and corresponds to DEFCON One. There’s nothing to worry about until they issue an LERTCON.”

“Explain those.”

“There are seven, the five DEFCONs plus the Defense Emergency and the Air Defense Emergency. The first is an attack on US forces and the latter is bombers or missiles in the air headed here.”

“Like if Russia carries out its threat and attacks Poland?”

“That would probably qualify as a Defense Emergency and we’d go to DEFCON One. The Navy would set Material Condition Zebra aboard all ships.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that.”

“Hope for the best and prepare for the worst? Off hand, I’d say we’ve done that, it’s just part of my survivalist mentality.”

“Prepper!”

“I am not. If it came right down to needing to do it, I would join in an insurrection.”

“And do what, attack the State Hospital at Woodward?”

“Most of their residents suffer from Down’s Syndrome. That report to the Governor suggested that Woodward was doing a far better job than Glenwood.”

With passage of time, the situation in the Caucasus didn’t improve and Russia began to assemble forces too close to Poland. Bush kept telling them to back off, but even Russians know what a lame duck is. It was the perception of what we were facing that probably led to Obama getting elected. He was our old war hero and Obama was too short on experience dealing in the international arena. Another point was that McCain could more easily pick up the reins from Bush and could hit the ground running. Nevertheless... we voted for change.

On the home front, we invited John and Phyllis up for Thanksgiving dinner and had the usual, a small turkey, smashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, green bean casserole, jellied cranberries and pumpkin pie. After the dinner settled in enough so we could move, I gave John the grand tour of the shelter.

“That’s our only freezer and we keep it in here so we don’t have to worry about moving the meat. The small bathroom has a stool, sink and shower. I use that desk as my radio room and we have the four bunk beds. The metal cabinet holds anything sensitive to EMP on the top two shelves and medical supplies on the other shelves. I don’t have a gun safe but the rifles are there on the wall out of reach of any children.

“We have Long Term Storage foods for the four of us for one year and close to another year with the meat in the freezer and canned goods.”

“Do you have an alternate source of power? I didn’t see any photovoltaic panels or a wind turbine.”

“John we have a diesel fueled generator that puts out about 100 amps of prime power at 240v and up to about one and one half times that in a surge. It’s include in the shelter so should the need arise, we can change the oil without exposing ourselves to whatever forced us into the shelter.”

“How much fuel do you have?”

“Five thousand gallons of biodiesel, it was cheaper than regular diesel.”

“How long would that last you if you lost power for some time?”

“Well, that depends; at 25% of the rated power, about 4,167 hours or about 173 days. At 100% power, it would 1,852 hours or about 77 days.”

“Patty said something about firearms.”

“I asked her what you had and suggested that she get you to buy a M1A. She complained about her M1A and I ended up buying a HK556 for her so we have an extra M1A for you to use. I also got you a used Colt M1911 but you’ll probably have to shoot full metal jacket ammo.”

“Shoot who?”

“It was just an expression, John. But, since you ask, anyone who needs shooting. Believe me; if it comes to that, you’ll recognize them.”

“Some guy named Charlie?”

“You were in that one?”

“Nineteen years old and scared to death. Yes, I was in that one. So, do you have LAW rockets and M61s?”

“I’ve never even seen an M61, other than pictures; we carried the M67. The Army moved to the M136 AT4 and only the Marines use the LAW in any great number. I wouldn’t know where to get either of them, but to be honest, I would mind having some.”

“Would you be able to buy them if they were available?”

“Probably not, we’re about tapped out. We have enough in the bank to get us through until spring and do the planting, but that’s about it.”

“You have a lot of preparations, where do you keep your gold and silver?”

“In my mouth, covering my teeth.”

“It might be a good time to buy, the prices are coming down.”

“Then, you should buy. Patty and I can’t do that now, especially with the baby on the way.”

“You managed to buy quite an arsenal.”

“It’s a matter of priorities, John. Would you rather have it and not need it than need it and not have it?”

“You do have a point, Jed. It’s Jedediah, right?”

“Yes, but only when I was in trouble with my late father.”

“I timed our drive up here. It took about fifteen minutes from Woodward.”

“If something should happen, just say for instance a defense emergency or an air defense emergency, how long would it take you to get around and come here?”

“Forty-five minutes to an hour.”

“That won’t do John. You might only have fifteen minutes, maybe twenty.”

“Do you want us to store some of our things here?”

“What I would suggest is that you think of the things you would round up and evaluate them. Anything that you don’t need at home should be stored here. I can give you a duplicate key to the shelter.”

“Keys can get lost.”

“Fine I’ll put on one of those combination locks with 4 rollers and set the combination to the last 4 numbers of your driver’s license.”

“Give me the key and we’ll do that over Christmas.”

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On Christmas day, John and Phyllis were back for a gift exchange and standing rib roast. After we’d eaten I got out the new padlock and we set the dials to the last four of his DL. He was pulling a small trailer that was fairly full. I got the two wheeler and we hauled the boxes in. There were totes of clothing, his firearms, except for his shotgun, and his ammo. In addition he had a large wood crate and didn’t comment on the contents. The final things we hauled in were six boxes, again unlabeled and not discussed.

“Do you have gas masks, Jed?”

“No, we don’t.”

“I didn’t think so. I got 4 of the MSA Millennium masks with extra filters. I also got 4 of the Tyvek suits they sell. They’re the Tychem BR165, a medium level suit. I added boots, gloves and tape. There are two child protection setups, the Baby Safe Pro. The stuff is in a couple of the totes. Do you have radiation gear?”

“A full set John and we’re covered from 50mR to 10,000R.”

“How much 7.62 NATO ammo do you have?”

“Just on the short side of 14 thousand rounds. How much .30-06 do you have?”

“Two hundred rounds of soft point and one thousand rounds of full metal jacket. I have a dozen bricks of .22LR and a case of number 4 buckshot. Plus, I have partial boxes of number 4 and number 6 shot.”

“I have an original Ruger Standard .22 pistol that Dad bought and I have a Winchester model 62A. The only gun that I don’t have much ammo for is my .30-30.”

“Winchester or Marlin?”

“Winchester model 94.”

“Check Aim Surplus and Ammoman. It will probably be imported, but that’s not important. That M1A is the same rifle as the M14, isn’t it? I saw some in ‘Nam.”

“Same rifle, civilian version, semi-auto only.”

“Most of the ones I saw were semi-auto only too; couldn’t handle them otherwise.”

Aim Surplus had 150gr .30-30 for \$97.50 per 200 rounds and I bought around \$500 worth. That gave me more than enough ammo for my saddle gun. I wasn’t into Single Action shooting, but the opportunity presented itself to purchase a used Ruger original Vaquero in .45 Colt and I bought it. I also bought 500 rounds of the Winchester cowboy ammo. That was mostly for the fun of it, recreational shooting; this wasn’t the Wild West and hadn’t been for 100 years.

John never did say what was in the large crate or last six boxes so I looked. The crate held 3 packing boxes and each of those contained 5 LAW rockets. The six boxes contained 30 M61 hand grenades each, probably left over from Vietnam. The US listed the M61 as obsolete although several countries around the world still used them or something like them. The British had the L2-A2, but they had replaced that with the RO 01A1.

I didn’t want him to know that I had violated his privacy so I made no mention of the contents of the boxes or the crate. Patty had announced her pregnancy in August and here we were in March of 2009 with her just short of enormous. She had two months to go and would be delivering around planting time. I had the seed corn and soybeans bought and stacked in the storage building. We had ordered that 40 seed package from the Ark Institute so we could plant in the garden.

The problem with their package was the things in it that I didn’t like. It included: Green Bush Beans...Pinto Beans...X-Early Sweet Yellow Corn...Green Sweet Peas...Sweet Red Beets...Edible Podded Snap Peas...Broccoli...Green Cabbage...Red Cabbage...



...Carrots...Plum Tomato...Cucumbers...Eggplant...Spinach... Cilantro/Coriander... Sweet Basil...Scallions...Butterhead Lettuce...Red Romaine Lettuce...Lettuces/Endive 8-Variety Mix...Sweet Spanish Onion...Italian Parsley...Anaheim Chili Pepper...Cayenne Pepper... Jalapeno Pepper...Pie Pumpkin...Pink Radishes...Butternut Squash...Rainbow Chard...Plum Tomato...Yellow Bush Bean...Cantaloupe...6-Variety Rare Heirloom Tomatoes...Red Looseleaf Lettuce...Yellow Summer Squash...Spinach...Tioga Hard Red Spring Wheat...Red Onion...Red/Green Sweet Bell Pepper...Baby Watermelon

The things I had no interest in were Broccoli, Eggplant, Spinach, Rainbow Chard, Yellow Summer Squash and Spinach. It was strictly a matter of preferences because Patty liked most of those things. I got different squash seeds. Did I say that I also got more melon seeds? It included Spaghetti Squash, Acorn Squash and honeydew melons because Patty liked the honeydew.

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*You hear all the time about light sweet crude, right? You sometimes hear about heavy crude. Crude oil may be considered light if it has low density or heavy if it has high density; and it may be referred to as sweet if it contains relatively little sulfur or sour if it contains substantial amounts of sulfur. Anyway, you get more diesel from heavy oil than you do from light oil. Have you seen the T. Boone Pickens' ads about wind energy?*

*America is in a hole and it's getting deeper every day. We import 70% of our oil at a cost of \$700 billion a year – four times the annual cost of the Iraq war.*

*I've been an oil man all my life, but this is one emergency we can't drill our way out of. But if we create a new renewable energy network, we can break our addiction to foreign oil.*

*On January 20, 2009, a new President gets sworn in. If we're organized, we can convince Congress to make major changes towards cleaner, cheaper and domestic energy resources.*

By Steven Milloy  
July 31, 2008

The more you learn about T. Boone Pickens' plan to switch America to wind power, the more you realize that he seems willing to say and do just about anything to make another billion or two.

This column previously discussed the plan's technical and economic shortcomings and marketing ruses. Today, we'll look into the diabolical machinations behind it.

Simply put, Pickens' pitch is "embrace wind power to help break our 'addiction' to foreign oil." There is, however, another intriguing component to Pickens' plan that goes

unmentioned in his TV commercials, media interviews and web site – water rights, which he owns more of than any other American.

Pickens hopes that his recent \$100 million investment in 200,000 acres worth of groundwater rights in Roberts County, Texas, located over the Ogallala Aquifer, will earn him \$1 billion. But there's more to earning such a profit than simply acquiring the water. Rights-of-way must be purchased to install pipelines, and opposition from anti-development environmental groups must be overcome. Here's where it gets interesting, according to information compiled by the Water Research Group, a small grassroots group focusing on local water issues in Texas.

Purchasing rights-of-way is often expensive and time-consuming – and what if land-owners won't sell? While private entities may be frustrated, governments can exercise eminent domain to compel sales. This is Pickens' route of choice. But wait, you say, Pickens is not a government entity. How can he use eminent domain? Are you sitting down?

At Pickens' behest, the Texas legislature changed state law to allow the two residents of an 8-acre parcel of land in Roberts County to vote to create a municipal water district, a government agency with eminent domain powers. Who were the voters? They were Pickens' wife and the manager of Pickens' nearby ranch. And who sits on the board of directors of this water district? They are the parcel's three other non-resident landowners, all Pickens' employees.

A member of a local water conservation board told Bloomberg News that, "[Pickens has] obtained the right of eminent domain like he was a big city. It's supposed to be for the public good, not a private company."

What's this got to do with Pickens' wind-power plan? Just as he needs pipelines to sell his water, he also needs transmission lines to sell his wind-generated power. Rights of way for transmission lines are also acquired through eminent domain – and, once again, the Texas legislature has come to Pickens' aid.

Earlier this year, Texas changed its law to allow renewable energy projects (like Pickens' wind farm) to obtain rights-of-way by piggybacking on a water district's eminent domain power. So Pickens can now use his water district's authority to also condemn land for his future wind farm's transmission lines.

Who will pay for the rights-of-way and the transmission lines and pipelines? Thanks to another gift from Texas politicians, Pickens' water district can sell tax-free, taxpayer-guaranteed municipal bonds to finance the \$2.2 billion cost of the water pipeline. And then earlier this month, the Texas legislature voted to spend \$4.93 billion for wind farm transmission lines. While Pickens has denied that this money is earmarked for him, he nevertheless is building the largest wind farm in the world.

Despite this legislative largesse, a fly in the ointment remains.

Although Pickens hopes to sell as much as \$165 million worth of water annually to Dallas alone, no city in Texas has signed up yet – partly because they don't yet need the water and partly because of resentment against water profiteering.

Enter the Sierra Club.

While Green groups support wind power, “the privatization of water is an entirely different thing,” says the Sierra Club. Moreover, the activist group has long opposed further exploitation of the very groundwater Pickens wants to use – the Ogallala Aquifer.

“The source of drinking water and irrigation for Plains residents from Nebraska to Texas, the Ogallala Aquifer, is one of the world's largest – as well as one of the most rapidly dissipating... If current irrigation practices continue, agribusiness will deplete the Ogallala Aquifer in the next century,” says the Sierra Club.

In March 2002, the Sierra Club opposed the construction of a slaughterhouse in Pampa, Texas, because it would require a mere 275 million gallons per year from the Ogallala Aquifer. Yet Pickens wants to sell 65 billion gallons of water per year – to Dallas alone.

In a 2004 lamentation about local government facilitation of Pickens' plan for the Ogallala, the Sierra Club slammed Pickens as a “junk bond dealer” who wanted to make “Blue Gold” from the Ogallala.

But while the Sierra Club can't seem to do anything about Pickens' influence with state legislators, they do have enough influence to make his water politically unpotable. This opposition may soon abate, however, now that Pickens has buddied up with Sierra Club president Carl Pope.

As noted last week, Pope now flies in Pickens' private jet and publicly lauds him. The two are newly-minted “friends,” since Pope needs the famous Republican oilman to lend propaganda value to the Sierra Club's anti-oil agenda and Pickens needs Pope to ease up on the Ogallala water opposition.

This alliance isn't sitting well with everyone on the Left.

A TreeHugger.com writer recently observed, “... I am left asking myself why the green media have neglected [the water] aspect of Pickens' wind-farm plans? Have we been so distracted by the prospect of Texas' renewable energy portfolio growing by 4000 megawatts that we are willing to overlook some potentially dodgy aspects to the project?”

It shouldn't sit well with the rest of us either. Pickens has gamed Texas for his own ends, and now he's trying to game the rest of us, too. Worse, his gamesmanship includes lending his billionaire resources, prominent stature and feudal powers bestowed upon him by the Texas legislature to help the Greens gain control over the US energy supply.

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I told you we didn't have wind turbines, maybe they had more wind in Texas. Patty wanted to know what I thought about the US putting radar in the Czech Republic and missiles in Poland. Did I think that Russia would really attack Poland?

"If they do, they'll be grandstanding. The missiles we're installing are a modified version of the THAAD with two stages rather than three. We had to agree to supply Poland with Patriot missiles too. However, the missiles we're installing wouldn't reach any Russian missile they might launch."

"Then you don't believe they will attack?"

"That's not what I said. What I said was that if they did, they'd be grandstanding."

"What would happen then?"

"Well, Poland and the Czech Republic are members of NATO. NATO is supposed to be the Three Musketeers, one for all, all for one *un pour tous, tous pour un.*"

"In Latin, you say, *Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno.*"

"Does it mean the same thing?"

"Sure, one for all, all for one. Anyway, NATO would go up against Russia?"

"Most would, but probably not all. You can probably count out Germany. France withdrew from the integrated military command in 1966 to pursue an independent defense system. However, they rejoined in 2008."

"Who would stop them?"

"The US, UK, Canada and probably several of the former satellites of the USSR."

"But, what could we do about a ground war in Europe?"

"Our whole military was developed around the idea of stopping an incursion into Europe by the USSR. That's why we have the Abrams tank, the Apache helicopter and the A-10. The UK has the Challenger II main battle tank, France the Leclerc and Germany the Leopard II and they out match anything that the Russians have up to and including the T-90. Apparently they're bringing out a new MBT in 2010, but I don't know if that's the T-95 or some different designation."

"Will it go nuclear?"

### Just in Time – Chapter 3

“Hard to say; hopefully not. If it does, it would probably start with tactical nukes before going to strategic nukes.”

“What’s the difference?”

“A tactical nuclear weapon refers to a nuclear weapon which is designed to actually be used on a battlefield in military situations. This is as opposed to strategic nuclear weapons which are designed to threaten large populations, damage the enemy's ability to wage war, or for general deterrence. Tactical nuclear weapons are generally considered part of a strategy of limited, rather than total, nuclear war.”

“Do we have those?”

“Everyone who has nuclear weapons probably has both kinds. A small nuclear bomb could serve as a tactical nuke. Some of the weapons have variable yields.”

“I just hope this doesn’t happen before the baby comes.”

“I doubt it will. I suspect Russia will hold off until the radar is up and running and the missiles are in their silos. Until then, they won’t have any reason to attack because the system wouldn’t be operational.”

My words turned out to be prophetic. The final missile was installed in early 2011, slightly ahead of schedule. In the past two plus years, the baby was born; Cheryl weighed 6lbs 9oz and was 20” long. Michael was born a year later and came in at an even 8lbs and 21”. John began to lend a hand on the farm *for something to do*, he claimed. We expanded our herds marginally by about 20-25% (two more cows, one more sow). We had very good yields in the fields and while the prices of corn and beans were down slightly, Patty and I accumulated some money. The price of gold and silver continued to fall and we got in at \$9 silver and \$500 gold. Silver seemed to be in short supply, for some reason. I picked up one of those safes that Costco sold and used it to store important papers, our gold and silver and John and Phyllis’s gold and silver. We all got the new biometric Passports.

Obama kept constant pressure on Russia over its expansionist policies but NATO, the UN and the EU didn’t do much to back up the US. Therefore, Russia continued to expand and resistance to the expansion was limited. Some of the countries Russia folded back into the fold were members of NATO; so much for one for all, all for one. CVN 77 was commissioned and the Kitty Hawk retired. CVN 78 was well into construction and was slated to replace the Enterprise. Although it wasn’t supposed to be commissioned until 2015, it appeared it would be commissioned a year ahead of schedule.

The Enterprise had been retired before the Ford was ready, due to condition and costs. That put the Navy in the position of only having 10 carriers despite the mandate that

they always had 11. In response, CVNs 79 and 80 were being constructed simultaneously and work on CVN 78 had been advanced to a record pace. The turnaround in the economy had helped make that possible. The housing slump had also turned, but recovery could take years.

John finally got around to telling me what was in the mystery boxes, not knowing that I already knew. I did the best I could at acting surprised. I even lamented the fact that we didn't have any Mk211MP for the Tac-50 rifle. First, he asked what it was and then said he'd see what he could do. I didn't hear any more about the subject for over a year.

"I have a buddy from my days in 'Nam. His son is in the Army Logistics area. He was the source of the crate and those boxes. He is also the source of this stuff. Guard it with your life, it wasn't easy to get."

There were six cans of the Mk211, 720 rounds, still in their sealed cans. The ammo was manufactured by WWC and bore a date of 2010. That happened the week before the US announced that the missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland were operational. I doubt I ever forget that time frame. There was more, John said, at Camp Dodge but we wouldn't be getting any more unless we helped ourselves. He also had something of a present for the two of us, suppressors for the M1As, scope mounts and variable power scopes.

John and I spent a weekend installing the scope mounts, the scopes and sighting the rifles in. He had a pair of FA762S suppressors. Two days later, the fact that the shelter was home to enough illegal things to get one or both of us in prison for years ceased to matter, Russia invaded Poland. Most of the members of NATO did in fact react because after Poland, you had Germany and after Germany, France.

Our immediate reaction was to order biodiesel to top off the tank; I thought a 55-gallon drum or two should do it, and to head to West Des Moines to Sam's Club and Costco to fill in any holes in our food supplies. The price of biodiesel was suddenly \$4 a gallon. Fortunately the Dallas County Sheriff had seen fit to issue CCWs to Patty and me and John and Phyllis although Phyllis privately swore she'd never, ever, carry a handgun.

John went along and we stopped by a friend of his. He came out with a pistol case and a smile on his face. It was another M1911, a Colt Commander in 9mm with spare magazines. After we hit both Costco and Sam's Club, we made a detour to Jack Smith's Guns and picked up 1,000 rounds of 9mm 124gr +P Gold Dot and a used AR15 for Phyllis. I bought another 200 rounds of A-MAX.

We got home and unloaded everything into the shelter. Phyllis and Patty had supper in the oven and had baked bread, testing a new bread recipe. They made cinnamon rolls, one loaf of French and 4 loaves of regular bread. Our children were 1½ and 6 months. Cheryl was in the very early toddler stage and was into everything. She was potty trained so we only had one in diapers.

Over the period of two years, a few additional things had been added to the shelter, with a view to a long term stay. First and foremost was the stacked laundry center, all electric. We bought it used from someone who was moving to full sized appliances. We spent the money to have Sears service the unit before we moved it into the shelter. We had increased our food supply by canning more than we ate.

NATO moved to counter the Russian incursion into Poland. While Russia had attack helicopters, so did NATO. NATO had far better tanks even though the new Russian T-90 tank had a 125mm gun. The problem was, there weren't enough of the T-90s and most of the tanks were T-80s or earlier models. Not even the T-90 was impervious to the Hellfire missiles that NATO was using.

Surprisingly, Russia was up against all 4 models of NATO's MBT, the Leclerc, the Challenger II with its outstanding protection, the Leopard II with its L55 gun and the Abrams M1A3 with the new L55 gun, new engine and improved fire control system. Except for the length of the gun, the A3 looked just like an A2 and we had plenty of the M1A2SEPs in service. We didn't build new tanks; we took the original hulls and upgraded them. Keep in mind we had a total of about 9,000 hulls to work with.

The most important part of the upgrade to the A3 had been replacing the turbine with a new turbine. The new engine was a state of the art upgrade to the engine they had planned on putting in the Crusader. The LV100-5 was upgraded to the LV50-2 and it produced 1.462kw/kg and used about 30% less fuel without giving up the advantages of the turbine engine the A2 and earlier models had used. It was being assembled as a packaged unit and could directly replace the Abrams current engine package.

The war was being covered live by embedded reporters and the four of us were sitting in the living room watching TV until it was time for John and Phyllis to go home. All of a sudden there was a bright light, brighter than the sun, and the TV transmission cut off. The network quickly switched back to the studio and made some excuse.

"Phyllis and I will be back in 30 minutes, Jed. You'd better see to your livestock and get them all in the barn."

"Nuke?"

"Unless I miss my guess, yes; we'd better prepare for the worst and hope for the best."

Patty and I started to grab the clean and dirty diapers, kid's clothing and a few changes for ourselves. I hauled and she boxed things up. The refrigerator was emptied and put in the shelter refrigerator. When we had things moved, I went to lock the livestock in the barn. They might not make it, the barn offered minimal protection against fallout if we got any. However, livestock was reportedly more radiation resistant. However it went, it couldn't be helped.

She had started a load of laundry, the dirty diapers, and had a pot of coffee on. The various radiological instruments were out of the cabinet and batteries installed. The remote units were connected to their cables, she'd been busy. I also noticed that the rifles in the racks had magazines installed. I checked them and they were in Condition 3, loaded magazine inserted, empty chamber. John and Phyllis returned right at 45 minutes after they left and I helped him move their things to the shelter.

"Do you want to sleep in the house or in the shelter?"

"If we sleep in the shelter, it won't matter what happens; if we sleep in the house, someone has to stay awake and watch the news. I'm not so sure I trust the NOAA radio you have, Jed."

"Fine, help me move the cribs."

The cribs folded once you removed the mattress and spring. It didn't take long to move them and when we had that finished; we added the biodiesel to the fuel tank. It only took one drum, leaving a spare, all being done in the light from the yard light. Thankfully, I had a pump that was inserted in the 2" bung that pumped 8gpm if you kept the crank going at 70rpm, which we couldn't. Call it ten minutes to empty the drum and move the pump to the second drum

"I'm ready for a cup of that coffee."

"Won't that keep you awake?"

"It relaxes me and helps me to sleep."

Patty and Phyllis had reassembled the cribs and put Cheryl and Michael down. They were watching the old 19" TV we had for the shelter. The networks were now reporting that it had been a tactical nuclear weapon but had no details. Homeland Security had raised the National Threat Advisory to Red. I assumed that the military was at DEFCON Two, Threatcon Delta and Material Condition Zebra.

The NTA was raised and lowered by Homeland Security but no one, except them, knew the basis for the level. It didn't seem to be related to the DEFCON or Threatcon level. Tom Ridge, the first Secretary of Homeland Security indicated that sometimes it was a mystery even to him and that there had been arguments over changes in the level. That's reassuring.

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After WW II, the West expected Russia to attack Europe, perhaps through the *Fulda Gap*. We are not certain when the term *Fulda Gap* began to be used in military circles to speak of the prominent terrain corridor that runs from what used to be East Germany



toward Frankfurt. Some of us remember hearing it in the 1960's. We do know that by 1980 the term was in broad use all the way up to NATO.

The core of this corridor begins in the region of Erfurt-Eisenach and crosses the Border in the Phillipstal-Rasdorf sector (the sector between our OPs xxxx and Alpha). From there it runs west to the gap between the Vogelsberg and the highlands north of the Autobahn. The broad corridor that begins at that gap and runs astride the autobahn all the way to Frankfurt and the Rhine is known specifically as the Wetterau Corridor. When you reflect on the last month of World War II you will recognize that the Wetterau Corridor and what we now know as the Fulda Gap served as the main avenue for the drive of the Third US Army from its Rhine bridgehead near Frankfurt onward to Leipzig and the heart of Germany. (At one point in April 1945 Third Army HQ was in Hersfeld.)

In the Cold War Soviet war planners from the Eight Guards Army Staff near Weimar all the way to the Ministry of Defense in Moscow probably had a codename for this avenue in the westbound mode. Maybe it was *Rhinegate*. Anyway, you do not have to be a war planner to look at the map of Germany and recognize that the shortest route from East Germany to the Rhine River was THIS avenue.

The alternate avenue, the North German Plain – region between the Berlin-Cologne autobahn and the North Sea coast, is traversed by two major rivers and a maze of shipping canals with steep banks. It is about twice as long as the Fulda Gap and its reaches the Rhine where it is about twice as wide as in the Frankfurt – Wiesbaden sector.

If the Eight Guards Army was deployed to forward positions before the outbreak of war its engineers would have needed bridging for only one secondary river, the Fulda, and that river was sometimes fordable in late summer. For the more probable scenario, a short warning attack with no preliminary deployment from kasernes (small camps) and training areas, some bridging could also have been needed for the Werra River.

When US military planners first found a need for a name to identify this probable axis of Soviet attack there may have been a debate as to whether it should be named for Fulda or Bad Hersfeld. Probably it was resolved in favor of Fulda because that was the better known city and its name was more user friendly (easier to say and write).

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East Germany was part of the reunified Germany and a member of NATO. Poland was the logical place for the Russian to attack, because that's where the BMD was. The war between Russia and NATO had escalated, but we didn't know that. It would take time for the US and UK to move MBTs to Poland and most of the load fell on the Germans and French. The Leclerc's gun was 120mm 52 caliber. The only tanks the US had in Europe were M1A2SEPs although they were supposed to be replaced by the M1A3s in a few months. Again, same hull, different, upgraded turret, electronics and new engine.

I'm not a flyer, but I believe the expression is kick the tires and light the fires. This expression originally meant to bypass or severely limit the time required for physical inspection of an aircraft prior to flight. I assume there was a lot of that going on in Europe. But, don't forget the Warthogs!

We had Multirole Fighters (F-35, F-18 & F-16) and Air Superiority Fighters (F-22, F-16 & F-15). An aircraft like the F-35 could be a strike aircraft, but it was number two when it came to being an air superiority fighter, following the F-22.

However, so did the Russians. The only thing they lacked was stealth and they had been working on that. They had more than one 4<sup>th</sup> generation fighter. The Sukhoi Su-35 Flanker-E is Russia's newest fighter aircraft. It is a modern upgrade to the Su-27 family and shares a lot of similarities to the Su-30MKI. The Su-35 is intended to be the last of the famous Flanker family. Although the last of the Flankers, it was upgraded even further in 2008 with the introduction of the Su-35BM. Only a small number of Su-35 has been fielded by the Russian Air Force with about 5 in active service. There is also the MiG-29, the MiG-33 and the MiG-35.

Those Russian fighters carried missiles including the AA-12 Adder, the AA-11 Archer and the AA-10 Alamo. The Adder which was a radar missile had been nicknamed the Amraamski and the Archer which was an IR missile could see targets up to 60° off the missile's centerline and be targeted by a helmet-mounted sight (HMS) allowing pilots to designate targets by looking at them. The Archer was at least as good if not better than the Sidewinder. The Alamo was a leftover missile that had both radar and heat seeking capacities. They had guns too, some of the 30mm.

The new missile is required to reestablish the parity of US aircraft in short range air combat, vis-à-vis improved foreign export aircraft and missiles. Specific deficiencies exist in the current AIM-9M in high off-boresight angle capability, infra-red counter-countermeasures robustness, kinematic performance, and missile maneuverability. The MiG-29 with its AA-10/AA-11 missiles is the major threat to US forces. Additionally, there are a number of other missiles on the world market that outperform the current US inventory AIM-9M weapon system in the critical operational employment areas.

The AIM-9X expanded the capabilities of the current AIM-9M by developing a new seeker imaging infra-red focal plane array, a high performance airframe, and a new signal processor for the seeker/sensor. The current acquisition strategy seeks to retain the warhead, fuze, and rocket motor of the current design in order to capitalize on the large existing inventory of AIM-9 weapons. The F-15C/D and the F/A-18C/D will be the initial platforms for integration and T&E. We had them in service by 2004.

The AIM-9X Sidewinder entered service in November 2003 with the USAF (lead platform is the F-15C; the USN lead platform is the F/A-18C) and is a substantial upgrade to the Sidewinder family featuring an imaging infrared focal plane array (FPA) seeker with claimed 90° off-boresight capability, compatibility with helmet-mounted displays such as the new US Joint Helmet Mounted Cueing System, and a totally new three-

dimensional thrust-vectoring control (TVC) system providing increased turn capability over traditional control surfaces. In the fall of 2006 the AIM-9X had 2 reported failures in their processors. In a flight on September 15, 2006, two AIM-9X missiles were fired and failed to lock onto their target. The missiles were then brought out of service until they fixed the problem. The missiles re-entered active operation by January 2008.

This business about aircraft is important because in order to win a war, you must have air superiority. That's the alpha and omega of ground warfare, air superiority. If they have air superiority, you could only win if a miracle happened. My source for the information on the missiles was a combination of Global Security and Wikipedia. That didn't matter because the tactical nuke had ramped up the battle. Do you trade tactical nuke for tactical nuke? If you do, how long before you move to strategic nukes? If you're smart you stop there and put the nasty toys away.

However, remember what the Russian General said? *Poland, by deploying (the system) is exposing itself to a strike; 100 per cent*, General Anatoly Nogovitsyn, the deputy chief of staff of Russia's armed forces, was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying. He added that Russia's military doctrine sanctions the use of nuclear weapons *against the allies of countries having nuclear weapons, if they in some way help them*. General Nogovitsyn also said that would include elements of strategic deterrence systems.

Russia is considering arming its Baltic fleet with nuclear warheads for the first time since the cold war, senior military sources warned last night.

The move, in response to American plans for a missile defense shield in Europe, would heighten tensions raised by the advance of Russian forces to within 20 miles of Tbilisi, the Georgian capital, yesterday.

Under the Russian plans, nuclear warheads could be supplied to submarines, cruisers and fighter bombers of the Baltic fleet based in Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave between the European Union countries of Poland and Lithuania. A senior military source in Moscow said the fleet had suffered from underfunding since the collapse of communism. *That will change now*, said the source.

*In view of America's determination to set up a missile defense shield in Europe, the military is reviewing all its plans to give Washington an adequate response.*

That was then and this is now. Now we had an honest to goodness nuclear detonation in Poland. I guess it would be difficult to claim we weren't warned. Wait, the General was talking about strategic nuclear forces not tactical nuclear forces.

It was also interesting because the US has a whole fleet of nuclear submarines equipped with nuclear tipped SLBMs. Well, we did cut back, from 8 warheads per missile to 6, reducing the total from 2,688 to 2,016, not counting the nuclear tipped TLAM-Ns on the SSGNs. So, I'm wondering if we actually did cut the number of warheads or

just swapped out like we did back in 1962. We pulled the Jupiter C missiles out in response to the Cuban missile crisis, but replaced them with Polaris missiles.

“Are we rocking and rolling yet?”

“I don’t know John, turn on the TV and see.”

*...to repeat, NORAD has issued an Air Defense Emergency. Everyone is advised to take shelter. ...to repeat, NORAD has issued an Air Defense Emergency. Everyone is advised to take shelter.*

“Crap.”

“I’ll double that.”

“What’s going on Jed?”

“It’s an Air Defense Emergency, missile or bombers or both are inbound.”

“Darn.”

The distance from Omaha, Nebraska and Perry, Iowa as the crow flies: 107 miles (172 km) (93 nautical miles); Initial heading from Omaha to Perry: east-northeast (67.4 degrees); Initial heading from Perry to Omaha: west-southwest (248.7 degrees). I looked it up a long time ago because Omaha and Lincoln were the most likely targets that could produce fallout that would irradiate Perry.

Assuming 1) Russia hit Omaha; and, 2) the wind speed was 10 miles per hour, we would begin receiving fallout in 11 hours, give or take, around 7pm, given the right wind direction. We would have plenty of time to milk the cows and store the milk in the shelter, twice. We couldn’t store that much milk so we’d have to convert it to some kind of cheese, Colby and Jack came to mind due to their ease of preparation. It didn’t take much to curdle milk. The curds could then be collected and I could follow the instructions in my book on making cheese. Cottage cheese was even easier.

We put down extra hay and made sure the float on the automatic tank valve worked. We could go out when the fallout hit 5R, but only for a few minutes. Long enough to top off the feed, but not milk the cows. We’d have to let them dry up because we couldn’t milk them. They had been bred and their production was waning already. The sows weren’t due to farrow for 7 weeks so we should be okay there. The eggs the chickens would lay would go to waste but that couldn’t be helped unless they were fertile in which case we might end up with more chickens.

It took a while for the radiation to peak; reaching 165R/hour and beginning to drop off and then resuming its climb as the radiation from Lincoln reached our area. It topped out at 180R/hour and I plugged that into TOM’s spreadsheet. It appeared that it takes a

shade over 3 weeks to fall below 104mR/hour, but wouldn't reach 50mR/hour until we'd sheltered for ~42 days. Forty two days is exactly 6 weeks, unless a week no longer lasts 7 days.

John and I went out very briefly while we all waited for the radiation level to reach 50mR. Not sure what to expect, we wore the P-14 and M1911. We'd suit up, make a mad dash to the barn and then stop and measure the radiation level inside. The walls of the barn seemed to provide a protection factor of 10. It was hard to tell because of the different ranges on our meters. We were generally out of the shelter for 30-45 minutes; longer as the radiation fell.

I didn't have a permanent pasture per se, just a feed lot, so we wouldn't have a problem with the now dry cows eating contaminated grass and putting Strontium 90 in the milk supply. Patty had a formula for Michael that could be mixed with water, milk or powdered skim or whole milk. Neither she nor Phyllis ventured out during the 6 week shelter stay so John and I had to answer endless questions about what we'd seen. The answer was, quite obviously, "Not much".

On our 21<sup>st</sup> and final trip before we opened up the shelter for good, a stray dog, a German Shepherd puppy, limped into the homestead. I ran the CD V-700 over him and he wasn't irradiated so we hauled him into the shelter. Guessing from his size and weight we decided that he'd been born after the war and was only about a month old. The limping came from a thorn in a paw and removing it was good for several puppy kisses. For want of a better name we decided to call him Shep. Until we could find dog food, he'd have to eat table scraps.

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We came out and began the clean up around the buildings using a high pressure hose. I don't know that we had to do that, but we did anyway, spending two days on the project. There were cooking supplies in the basement and Patty and Phyllis used those after they hauled the things from the shelter refrigerator to the kitchen refrigerator. Our first meal after coming out was home baked bread and a beef pot roast with vegetables.

I stuck the diesel tank and we had used around 2,000-gallons. We had local telephone but no power. I assumed that Qwest must have backup power. I don't know what the deal was with Mid-American Energy; hopefully they'd get power up soon. We checked all of the vehicles and they started and ran, eliminating the possibility of HEMP and/or any nearby nuclear detonations. After we'd cleaned up around the buildings, John and I added the last drum of biodiesel to the tank. At best, it would give us another 46 hours of run time and at worst, about 20 hours.

"Let's consider our priorities."

"I can see two; security and finding more fuel if we're going to have to depend on the generator for power."

“We should be fairly secure Jed, at least for now. Eventually, the survivors will run out of food and come salvaging. If we’re assigning priorities, I suggest we go for fuel. The only local supplies would be at the gas stations.”

“How about Heartland Coop in Minburn? That’s pretty much off the beaten path and could be our best bet.”

“How are you going to haul it?”

“I have two 55 gallon drums and we will have to find more. I’m not sure how we’re going to pump it out of the ground to put it in the drums.”

“Why don’t you two check with the guy who sells us biodiesel? Even if he doesn’t have any, he may have something to help you out.”

“We can’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“It makes too much sense and I didn’t think of it first.”

I called him and he had 12 drums of biodiesel for sale and he’d sell it, drums and all, for two ounces of gold. He had a rotary vane pump that could be run of a 12v vehicle battery and could be connected to  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” garden hoses. He said to keep the suction hose as short as possible, lest it collapse. Or, we could buy a 100’ roll of water suction hose he had from Central States Hose and add our own fittings for 10 ounces of silver.

It became apparent that the phone service was, at best, iffy. You never knew if you were going to get a dial tone when you picked up the phone. That continued for about 3 weeks and then it cut out completely. Perhaps they’d run out of fuel for their backup power. We’d added the 12 additional drums of biodiesel to the tank and after we had the hoses set up, headed out to look for more. We tried the Coop at Minburn first and it was deserted. In fact of the approximate 400 residents, we saw less than 20. We pumped the twelve drums full, 5 were on the pickup and 7 on the trailer and took them home and added another 660-gallons to the tank.

It was still early in the afternoon so we went back to Minburn for a second load. By the time we’d added the 55-gallons and another 1,980-gallons, the tank was full to the top. It was too late in the day to make a third trip to Minburn, so we called it a day and tended to the livestock. We were just in time to help the sows deliver their pigs and we had 45 new piglets.

## Just in Time – Chapter 4

We cleaned up and ate dinner, then retired to the living room with our coffee. Shep jumped up in my lap, causing Cheryl to breaking out in tears. She'd been trying all day to make Shep *her dog* with little success. I ended up with her on one leg and Shep on the other and my coffee sat there and got cold.

"We had a good day, Jed."

"I'd say so, the fuel tank is full and we have 45 new pigs."

"You'll have to plow the alfalfa under so the hay won't contain Strontium 90. Do you have replacement seed?"

"I don't because I didn't realize I'd need it. We can get it in Perry along with the seed corn and soybean seed."

"Are you sure?"

"You can't eat the seed because it's treated. That won't be a problem. I hope we have enough gas for the tractor or we'll be using the mules to farm."

"At least you have the equipment."

"That's true, but it takes more manpower than we have if we use mules."

"How about we use both? We can use the mules to pull the wagons and hay racks and the tractor to pull the implements."

"You ever drive a mule?"

"Drove horses a few times, it can't be that different. When we empty the 55-gallon drums, we could get gasoline instead of diesel. I have PRI-G, PRI-D and kerosene at home to use as an anti-gel. You sort of got me interested in this survival business and I bought a case each of the G and D in gallon bottles 2 gallon cans of kerosene. You'll need the PRI-D when you get down to B-20."

"It would be nice if we could find more tanks to store diesel and gasoline. If we could do that, we could salvage a lot of the available gasoline and diesel for future use."

"What are you going to do when the generator needs to be rebuilt?"

"I hadn't given it much thought."

"We can haul my standby up here and use it."

“When did you get a standby?”

“About a year ago. It was around the time you asked me about the Mk211.”

“What did you get?”

“A Cummins diesel the same as yours. Well, not quite, it’s a model DGBC, same engine with a different alternator, I think. I’m sure it weighs the same, around ¾ ton.”

“How are we going to move that?”

“Maybe a trailer and use a tractor with a chain to pull it on the trailer.”

“We should do that soon, before someone else finds it and salvages it.”

“Fine, we’ll go tomorrow. It will take you a long time to drive your tractor down to our place, but that will give me time to disconnect everything. I’ll get Phyllis to come along and cover my back.”

That should prove to be interesting. I can just see Phyllis if a BG showed up, screaming for help. However, John equipped her with his new shotgun and her new pistol. I was surprised when she didn’t complain about the handgun. Different times call for different measures, I guess.

It was over a two hour drive to their place on the tractor. John had disconnected the generator and jacked it up before sliding the trailer partway underneath. The trailer was blocked so it wouldn’t move when I tightened the chain to pull the generator on the trailer. I’d say it took all of ten minutes to load it and hook the trailer to my pickup. I turned the NAA around and headed for home and John and Phyllis passed me before I’d gone a mile. The back of the pickup was loaded with something, he didn’t say. It looked like cases of oil. One case of oil would change the oil twice. We’d definitely need some drums of oil.

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Our next project was to find fuel tanks, preferably empty, and haul them home. We started checking the towns in Dallas County. We eventually found a set of 3 above-ground tanks that each held 12,000 gallons. They were new, empty and in their shipping packaging. John and I found a lowboy and a small crane. We moved them to the site and began to haul them home, with the truck mounted crane following to do the unloading. When we had the third tank onboard the lowboy, we returned to Minburn and started to pump out the gasoline tanks. It took 20 hours to fill the tank on the trailer and about exhausted their gasoline supply. It also took all 6 gallons of PRI-G that John had to stabilize it.



We returned home and spent another 20 hours emptying the tank on the truck into one of the two tanks. After a day off to rest up, we went back and began loading diesel. Herein, we had a problem, 6 gallons of PRI-D and hopefully 24,000-gallons of diesel. The Coop sold mainly to farmers and most farmers used diesel tractors these days. We checked the building and found a large number of empty gallon PRI-D cans, so maybe the diesel was already stabilized. We decided to chance it, because we could always add PRI-D later.

We used a manual double throw, triple pole switch (actually a quadrupled pole with one pole not used) to connect the generators to the ATS, allowing us to start up the second generator and flip the switch, hence the source of power. It came in handy for the oil changes and would be great when time came to rebuild my generator, still the primary power unit. I had a passing thought about finding parts.

With respect to the war, I'd read somewhere that the result would be zero-sum. In game theory that means the gains by one are offset by the losses of the other, resulting in a sum of zero when they're added together. I don't see how a GTW could be described as a zero-sum. In a GTW, every side lost; some just less than others. The only way not to lose was to not participate, if they let you. Gee, that sounds like something I saw in a Star Trek show or movie.

"How large is the remaining population of Perry, in your best estimation Jed?"

"Hard to say, it was over 8,000 before the war and at least half of them must have made it."

"Why do you think that many made it?"

"Well, they had basements to use for shelter. They are a fairly conservative group of people so probably had some food on the shelves."

"And if they didn't have food on the shelves?"

"I suppose they probably went out looking for some and perhaps got a dose of radiation."

"But we don't really know, do we?"

"I guess not, we haven't been to town yet."

"Feel like risking it?"

"If there is a good reason, I suppose so."

"I'm out of my blood pressure medicine and I checked and my blood pressure is up quite a bit."

“I suppose that’s a good of a reason as I can think of. We can check out the pharmacies, I doubt people would loot blood pressure medicine.”

There was the HyVee Pharmacy, the Medicap Pharmacy and the Pamida Pharmacy. It was risky going into town without doing a recon first, but John said he really needed the drug. HyVee is a grocery store, Pamida a sort of department store like a small Wal-Mart and Medicap was a stand-alone Pharmacy. I got a pry bar, just in case, and off we went, armed to the teeth. John was carrying Patty’s P-14, his shotgun and Patty’s M1A. I was equally armed, except my shotgun was my 590A1.

First off, we didn’t need the pry bar. Second off, I had been right and the blood pressure medicine wasn’t the first choice of the previous looters. I sure hope no one needed Vicodin, Tylenol #3 or morphine sulfate because there was none to be found, we looked. We did find Demerol, but that was not a preferred painkiller these days. Compared to morphine, Demerol was supposed to be safer and carry less risk of addiction, and to be superior in treating the pain associated with biliary spasm or renal colic due to its putative antispasmodic effects. In fact, Demerol is no more effective than morphine at treating biliary or renal pain, and its low potency, short duration of action, and **unique toxicity** (i.e. seizures, delirium, other neuropsychological effects) relative to other available opioid analgesics have seen it fall out of favor in recent years, for all but a very few, very specific indications. Biliary pain is associated with the gall bladder. I have all of these medical books on my computer, just in case, so I could look it up.

We didn’t need any pain killers; I had 4 100-count bottles of Vicodin 10/325, the good stuff. Why is it the good stuff? It has much less Tylenol and much more Hydrocodone. Too much Tylenol will kill you quicker than you can imagine. The maximum dose per day is 4 grams (8 500mg tablets) and the LD<sub>50</sub> is 7grams (14 500mg tablets). Lethal Dose 50 is the level where 50% of the people die from the medicine. It is also called the median lethal dose.

“Are you set?”

“I hope so, Jed. I took all I could find of the medicine I currently take plus all of the medicine I’ve previous taken with good results. I must have a 3-4 year supply.”

“What do you take now?”

“Diovan (valsartan). Before that, I took Norvasc (amlodipine) and before that, I took Tenormin (atenolol) and Calan (verapamil). Each worked although I think they have different mechanisms. Plus I loaded up on all the diuretic I could find, triamterene (brand names: Dyazide, Maxzide). That comes in 100 count bottles and I have even more of that than the blood pressure medicine. What did you get?”

“Mostly bandages, gauze pads and tape. I found some blood stopper bandages, but I don’t remember the name at the moment, wait, it was QuikClot ACS+ Trauma Kit w/Cinch Bandage.”

“Get a lot of those?”

“All they had, twelve.”

“Any of us end up getting shot; you’ll be damn glad you found them. One of the problems in combat, as you know, is blood loss before you can get the guy to medical treatment. What did you use in Iraq?”

“They were just starting to issue QuikClot for the first aid kits when I got out, but that was a powder, I think.”

“There are several brands, but QuikClot seems to be favored by many agencies. Hem-Con is another good one. There’s QuikClot, HemCon, ArtCel, Qwick Aid, ChitoFlex, D-stat Dry, and Stasilon and probably more that I don’t know about.”

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“Are the two of you done running around or should Mom and I file for divorces?”

“We were just accumulating supplies to see us through until things get back to normal Patty.”

“Where did you store a million gallons of diesel?”

“A million gallons? Where did you get that idea?”

“Assuming maximum consumption of 2.7gph for the 8,766 hours per year and assuming we live until age seventy-five, we’ll need 23,668 gallons a year for 47 years or 1,112,405 gallons of diesel.”

“Assuming nothing gets restored.”

“Do you think it will be restored?”

“In forty-seven years? I should hope so. With the population reduced, the demand will be reduced and if people can get the remaining resources working, we should have power.”

“Okay, say you’re right. How long do you think it will take?”

“I don’t know Patty, certainly not 47 years. I think something more on the order of ten years would be in order.”

Just then the NOAA radio sounded and we turned up the volume to listen.

*My fellow Americans,*

*FEMA had completed an initial assessment of the damage to the US. Many major cities and military installations were targeted, but in the final analysis, it proved to be far less than we first imagined. The announcer will list the cities and the installations at the end of this broadcast.*

*Casualties are in keeping with the scope of the attack. Estimates are that approximately 35 million died as a direct result of the attack. An additional 40 million died in the immediate aftermath from causes ranging from radiation sickness to burns and or infections. Perhaps as many as an additional 10 million died as an indirect result of the attack, either from loss of medical services, prescription medicines or illness like typhoid and cholera.*

*All water must be purified before use if we are to avoid further outbreaks of cholera and typhoid. Minimal communications have been established with state and local authorities and they will distribute additional information.*

*According to satellite information, many of Russia's missiles failed during the launch process, missed their targets or failed to detonate at the planned yields. Those same satellites showed that this time your country got it right with weapons arriving on target and producing the proper yields.*

*There are no winners in a war like this. If anything, the greatest measure of success is the performance of the weapons and the survival rates among the warring countries. If this shall be the measure, we lost far less than Russia. Fortunately the exchange of nuclear weapons was limited to the US and Europe on our side and Russia on the opposing side. Let this be a warning to other nuclear nations, we have enough remaining nuclear capacity to destroy all remaining nuclear powers including our allies if need be.*

*One final note on the Middle East; in the confusion surrounding Russia's attack on Poland, Iran took it upon themselves in conjunction with Syria to attack Israel. Since we were occupied ourselves, we green-lighted any response that Israel felt appropriate in the circumstances. Both Iran and Syria, according to our satellites, are smoking ruins.*

*State National Guard forces are assisting law enforcement and our active duty military is assisting the National Guard when asked to do so. I have declared a National Emergency, but Posse Comitatus prevents me from using our military in a law enforcement capacity. I have not suspended Habeas Corpus.*

*Hear me and hear me well, looters will be shot on sight if there is evidence to clearly support the fact of looting. In cases where citizens find it necessary to salvage things like medical supplies and so forth, a tally must be taken for later restitution to the firm*

*being salvaged. Please report any salvage activities to your local law enforcement. You may do so without penalty.*

*The long nuclear nightmare that we have been in fear of since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has come to pass. Hope and pray it won't happen again.*

*Michelle and I have all of you in our thoughts and prayers here at Cheyenne Mountain. The Vice President and his family are secure at facilities at Camp David and we were able to get the majority of Congress to the Greenbrier and other locations. Our Supreme Court is intact here in Colorado with me.*

*Stay tuned for additional information concerning the attacks.*

*Thank you and good afternoon.*

“Eighty-five million? I don't know if that is good or bad.”

“I think it is good Jeb. It could have just have well been 150 million. Did you notice that China wasn't listed as an attacker?”

“Well, according to Global Security and Wiki, they only had about 400 weapons. If they had participated, we might well have reached that 150 million mark. I'm surprised that the UK and France didn't involve themselves.”

“I'm not, but why do you say they weren't involved? He said that our side included the US and Europe.”

“I guess I was just assuming is all. If they were struck by weapons they must surely have retaliated. They have about the same tracking capacities we have and can launch on warning the same as we can.”

“Let's just hope this ends the Cold War and there won't be another hot war.”

“Now, what about some kind of guard schedule in case we have armed intruders?”

“We can't stay up nights trying to guard the farm. How about we install some kind of perimeter security alarm system?”

“Well John if we could get a wireless home security system with motion detectors that might do the job.”

“We could even put a sensor on the gate. I saw a new system Radio Shack had that could handle a dozen stations and had a wireless range of about 1,500'.”

“What do you think about a security system Patty?”

“If it meant we could sleep at night, I’d be all for it.”

“I think the nearest Radio Shack is in Perry and the next closest in probably West Des Moines or Adel.”

“We have a Radio Shack?”

“Don’s Radio and TV.”

“Go get one tomorrow, Jed, but make this your last trip out for a while, please?”

“Can do.”

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I did a little math of my own. A diesel generator is generally good for up to 16 thousand hours of continuous use. In those 47 years Patty was talking about, call it 48 for ease of calculation, each generator would run 24 years and need to be rebuilt 12 times to be of use beyond the 48 years. That would take a pile of parts and a diesel engine mechanic, at the very least. I wasn’t sure how much oil and how many filters we go through, but it had to be a bunch. We needed to do a lot of salvage!

I had started out with enough oil and filters for a year and John had enough for two years. I’d gone through a significant portion of my supplies and need more. Cummins had an outlet in Des Moines and another in Cedar Rapids. We’d best strike while the iron was hot and get filters, all the oil we could locate and rebuild kits for the engines and the alternators. There was a third location in Rock Island than may or may not have made it through; the Quad Cities weren’t on the strike list. Omaha and Kansas City were probably gone so they’d be our last choice.

Each of the two stores had a DGBC in stock and we appropriated them along with all of the oil, filters and rebuild kits we could find. We were way short on oil and started checking oil change shops, locating about 30 drums of the 10w-30. We also found a wireless security system in Des Moines and brought it home along with battery chargers and rechargeable batteries. There were two types: plug in and solar powered.

“If we could find enough solar panels, batteries and inverters, we might try solar power for the farm.”

“I don’t know; 40kw would take a lot of solar panels and the other equipment. If we could get 200w panels, we’d need 200 and enough inverters to produce 40kw/hr.”

“Let’s just keep our eyes open for solar equipment, okay?”

“Yeah, that’s okay with me.”

We continued to monitor the ham bands to see how the country was fairing. We began to pick up reports of National Guard troops, supported by the regular military, lending aid and comfort, providing food and medical supplies and so forth around the country. That included the Iowa National Guard so any ideas we had about going to Camp Dodge fell by the wayside. One platoon made up of Guard and military was stationed in Perry and housed in the High School Gymnasium.

The word was they were doing a detailed census, identifying survivors, determining their needs, if any, and maintaining a high profile in support of local law enforcement. Our observations showed that they were locked and loaded and meant business. Salvage was being allowed on a case by case basis, especially for medicines the older members of society needed desperately. Medicines were made available from the National Stockpiles. It turned out that the only Iowa community with any war related damage was Council Bluffs and that came due to the attack on Omaha.

We had enough fuel for a year and settled in per Patty's request to tend to the farm. We installed the perimeter security system around the homestead and down the road all the way to the property lines. I haven't said, but the homestead was centered on the 160. Our land was  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile wide by  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile deep. We tested the security system and it worked as advertised but need to be checked regularly to swap out batteries.

We easily adopted a pattern caring for the livestock and in our off time, prepared the fields and garden for planting. The alfalfa field was turned, disked, dragged and reseeded. We were slowly moving to planting time for the field crops and the gardens. Planting the field was essentially a one-person job, so John helped with the garden. This year's garden would be double the size ~2 acres of previous gardens and we'd have to sell fresh produce because we were short on canning jars. Our garden had been 100x400 or 40,000ft<sup>2</sup>. This year it would be 100x800 or 80,000ft<sup>2</sup>.

There were plenty of jars and lids around, but people refused to part with them because there were small gardens in every backyard in Perry and other communities. That was, at best, a short term solution because most of the seeds available were hybrids. We decided to save a larger portion of the heirloom seed than normal and go into the seed business the following year. That would be mostly a one shot deal when we explained how they should go about harvesting seeds for the following year's use. We were located in zone 5a relating to seed hardiness.

We went to the HyVee store and asked the manager if he could get us jars. He responded that they had large quantities in Chariton and Cherokee, but he wasn't really certain how many he could get just for us because the jars and lids were being allocated. We told him if we could get a gross of cases of quarts, we'd be willing to pay a premium and we'd do the same for 3 cases of lids. Money talks and BS walks, I guess, we got our gross of cases of quarts and 3 cases of lids, but they cost.

Perry is home to one of the Oscar Mayer plants. This one makes lunch meats among other things. If you've eaten Oscar Mayer bologna or hot dogs, the odds are it came

from Perry. However, Oscar Mayer has many locations besides Perry, so I'm not sure how true that statement is. The company is now owned by Kraft Foods.

Over the summer, we canned until we ran out of jars and then froze what we could. After we ran out of jars, we let most of the plants go to seed and then carefully harvested the seed and labeled each variety. We also sold some of the remaining produce to the HyVee store and got somewhat of a premium to compensate for the cost of the jars and lids. Our largest crop was potatoes and we had planted Kennebec and Yukon Gold. In fact half the garden or all of the new area was planted in those potatoes. With a yield of up to 80 pounds per plant, we were up to our eyeballs in spuds and spent a lot of time digging them up.

Many Midwestern folks can be called the meat and potato crowd because those foods represent to core of their diet. Add a vegetable, typically green beans, corn, peas or carrots plus bread and milk and you have the average meal. Desserts are occasional items since many are fruit based like apple, pumpkin and cherry pie. I can't say for sure, but I believe chocolate cake is widely preferred, especially Devil's Food.

An announcement came from the state Capitol in Des Moines that increased raiding activity had been documented and most of the attacks had been against farms. In order to reduce the potential for attacks, roving patrols were being instituted. If you're familiar with Iowa, you know that much of the state is a grid system with a road running north and south/east and west every mile. Farm homesteads face the roads giving any would be raider easy access. It also means that Iowa has a lot of miles of roads. Most are gravel topped roads and include regular gravel roads and more heavily maintained farm-to-market roads.

Unlike portions of the country, blacktops (asphalt roads) are relatively few and far between. The Iowa National Guard doesn't have enough vehicles to patrol every road on a continuous basis. We noted that we averaged one pass a day, not enough to deter any determined raider. Then, news came of a farm about 3 miles away being raided. The farmer and his family were killed, the livestock taken and the buildings thoroughly ransacked. It sounded like a large operation to us.

"It appears that they waited until the harvest to begin the raids. Do you think that was a conscious decision or did they just run out of food?"

"Neither, John; I believe that it's just plain banditry. Although, winter is coming so they may be stocking up. They have enough livestock, but do they have enough food? We'd better make sure our security preparations are operational and find out what frequencies to contact the National Guard on. Surely they must be monitoring some ham frequencies."



## Just in Time – Chapter 5

The Guard was using 10-meters and had 4 different frequencies being monitored constantly, one each for locations north, east, south and west of Perry. We were in section 2, the east section. Lines radiated out from Perry at 45°, 135°, 225° and 315° defining the sections.

I was outside working with Shep trying to teach him to heel when I noticed a large cloud of dust about a mile down the road coming this way. I took Shep into the house and everybody armed up. I told, as opposed to ask, Patty to be prepared to call the Guard. They could be here under ten minutes. John and I went out to the front porch and sat down, waiting to see what happened next. What happened next was the dust cloud stopped about ¼ mile down the road.

“Patty, they stopped down the road; if the alarm goes off call the Guard.”

John and I hurried to the shelter and picked up 2 LAW rockets apiece and 4 grenades each. He reiterated the firing procedures for the LAW and we hunkered down to wait.

“The alarm went off, Jed, I radioed the Guard and they’re on their way. What are those things?”

“Rockets.”

“And those balls are hand grenades?”

“Never take a stick to a knife fight or a knife to a gun fight.”

We could see them moving cautiously across the field. The plowed ground was slowing them down and I was happy I hadn’t decided to disk. They were about 100 yards out, well with range of all of our weapons when the Guard showed up with 3 Hummers. Two mounted the CROWS with the Mike 2 Hotel Bravos and one with an Mk 19. The Mk 19 made short work of their vehicles while the CROWS units moved forward and laid down withering fire. We never fired a shot. When someone dismounted a Hummer and headed our way, John hurriedly took the LAWs and grenades into the house and told Patty, “put these up.”

“Is everyone ok?”

“Thank you Sergeant; yes we’re all okay. It’s just a good thing they stopped where they did and decided to hoof it in. Had they come directly here, things could have been different.”

“This is the second group we’ve had to deal with in the area today. You’d better keep your guard up, there may be more.”

“We’re ready for them if they come.”

“Two M14s against a crowd of 15? You’d better shoot first and ask questions later.”

“We have other resources although I’d rather not be specific. One thing we have is a .50 cal rifle.”

“Do you have wives to back you up?”

“Yes, one armed with a MR556 and the other an AR15. We all have pistols and enough shotguns to go around.”

“Suppressors?”

“Improved flashhiders.”

“They are that. It’s just a shame you don’t have a grenade launcher and some 40mm grenades, but I can’t give you any.”

“When I was in ‘Nam, we used LAW rockets; do you have any of those?”

“Sure wished I did; hell I’d give you some if I had them since you apparently have used them before. We can’t pass out anything without training and we don’t have the time to do any training.”

“So, what you’re saying is that you wouldn’t get bent out of shape if we found some LAWs to use.”

“Don’t get caught looting, that’s a death sentence.”

“We’ll keep that in mind.”

“To answer your question, no I would get bent out of shape, too far. Hopefully you won’t have any more trouble, but if you do, call. We keep 4 rapid reaction forces on standby at all times.”

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“What did the soldier say?”

“He was a Sergeant First Class and he gave us tacit approval to use the LAW rockets.”

“What about the grenades?”

“They never came up. The only reason the rockets came up was because your Dad told the Sergeant he was in ‘Nam and had used the LAWs. That came after he said we needed 40mm grenades but couldn’t give us any”

“What’s this world coming to with explosives all around the house?” Phyllis asked.

“It didn’t take them long to get here.”

“The Sergeant said they maintain 4 rapid reaction forces on standby at all times. I would think that they could get to any spot within Dallas County within 15 minutes or less.”

“We’ll eat after you clean your rifles.”

“What for, we didn’t have to shoot, although it was getting close.”

“How close?”

“They were within 100-yards.”

“Don’t you dare do that again! You both are capable of MOA shots out to 500 yards. There is no reason to endanger our children by letting them get that close.”

“Yes dear.”

“Don’t you dare yes dear me. You’ll be sleeping on the couch until Hell freezes over. You have a rifle that can easily take out people at 1,000 meters and it cost a bloody fortune. Use it or lose it! And, get those rockets and grenades out of the house!”

There are times when the best response is to nod and do as instructed. This seemed to be one of those times. I was going to have to find a cabinet for the house where we could store the grenades and rockets. We might not have time to run to the shelter next time, if there was a next time. John gave me a hand and we moved the metal cabinet from the shelter into the living room, right next to the front door. We put half of the grenades and all of the rockets in the cabinet and locked it. I gave John my spare key and vowed to get two more spares made the next time we went to Perry.

The Sergeant said he couldn’t give us grenade launchers, but he didn’t say he couldn’t give us grenades. I pondered that through dinner a late into the evening.

“John do you know anywhere you could get a Mike 79?”

“How many?”

“You can get them?”

“The grenade launcher isn’t the problem, the grenades are the problem. There are some Mike 79s around because some police forces use them to launch non-lethal munitions and smoke. Some military units still use them too.”

“He said he couldn’t give us grenade launchers, John; he didn’t say anything about grenades.”

“I took it to mean that he couldn’t give us either.”

“Could be, but it wouldn’t hurt to ask. How hard will it be for you to get a couple of the Mike 79s?”

“A quick trip to Des Moines, want to ride along?”

“Sure, if Patty will let me. We’ll go tomorrow.”

“Your Dad knows where he can get some grenade launchers and the Sergeant said it was a shame we didn’t have any because he didn’t have time to train us.”

“How long will you be gone?”

“Three hours tops, probably less.”

“Will they keep the bad guys back?”

“They have a range of 165 meters for point targets and 200 meters for area targets.”

“Well, if it will keep them away from the house, okay.”

The next morning after chores, we drove to Clive and John pulled up to a house and parked. He told me to wait in the car while he talked to his friend. The door was answered and John and the man struck up a conversation. In short order, John waved for me to join him.

“Fred, meet Jed. Jed, Fred. Fred and I served together in ‘Nam and he was our grenadier. He has quite a collection Mike 79s and has agreed to let us borrow two. The only ammo he has is flechettes and buckshot. We can have 18 rounds of each.”

“Fred, we sure appreciate that. Yesterday we had a bit of trouble and the Guard bailed us out. John and I don’t agree, but I think that if we have the launchers, the Guard will give us 40mm rounds.”

“Get HE, HEDP and smoke. If they’ll give you para illum rounds, you can fight at night too. I want those launchers back when you’re done with them. Use the HE as anti-personnel rounds and the HEDP as anti-vehicle rounds.”

We visited for a short time and Fred covered the aiming part of using the weapon. Then, he dug around and found 4 practice rounds for us to use. He had somewhere to go so we didn't stay long and went from his house directly to Perry.

"Sergeant, yesterday you said, *It's just a shame you don't have a grenade launcher and some 40mm grenades, but I can't give you any.* Were you referring to the launcher or the grenades? We have launchers."

"Loot them?"

"Borrowed them. They're Mike 79s."

"What do you have for rounds?"

"Eighteen each flechettes and buckshot."

"And you want?"

"Para illum, smoke, HE and HEDP. Could we get 36 rounds of each?"

"I think you misunderstood, when I said I can't give you any, I was referring to both the launchers and the grenades. I'd get mighty upset if I were to find out that you got in the third tent there and helped yourselves to those rounds. I might even have to come out and search your place."

"And if you didn't find them?"

"I'd have to assume it was someone else who took them. Remember looters get shot."

The Sergeant turned on his heel and marched off like he was late for an appointment. We looked around, didn't see any one and moved the vehicle right next to the tent. It took about 2 minutes to find and load what we wanted. When we got home, we hauled them to the hay loft in the barn and buried them two bales deep. Around 2pm, a Hummer pulled up and the Sergeant and 3 troops got out.

"I'm here to search."

"Help yourself; you're the law around here."

They searched for over an hour, but didn't find what they were looking for. Or, if they did, pretended they didn't.

"I'm sorry; it must have been someone else."

"Well you said if they turned up missing you'd come looking. No harm, no foul. You fellas care for coffee and cinnamon rolls? The rolls are fresh out of the oven."

"I guess so, we don't get many treats and I think our cook must have been in the Navy, you just have to taste his coffee, or chew it as the case may be."

They did a job on the pan of rolls and went through two pots of Folgers. The Sergeant asked about the cabinet so I opened it and showed him. That drew a low whistle. He asked if the rockets were left over from 'Nam or new issue. John told them they were new issue. He also noticed the Mk211.

"Figures, you did say you have a .50 cal. Which model?"

"McMillan Tac-50, Mk-15. Almost bought a Mike 82 Alpha 1 Mike, it's the same as the M107, except for the BORS sighting system."

"We came up short six cans at Camp Dodge. The crap really hit the fan for a while, but no heads rolled. Guess I know where it went."

"We know nothing, Sergeant."

"Let me know if you run out, we've been resupplied and actually have more than we need. We don't plan on shooting many civilians."

"Anytime you feel like dropping off a few more cans, feel free. We'll take good care of it and will probably be able to give it back when things settle down."

They finished their coffee and left. Neither John nor I saw them off. When it came time to do the milking we headed for the barn. On the front porch sat 6 cans of Mk211. (I asked about it later and he said he knew about the rifle and assumed I didn't have any Mk211. Since he concluded they wouldn't be able to find the 40mm grenades, he brought the ammo as a peace offering. I told him where we'd hidden the grenades and he laughed, they'd only gone 1 bale deep.)

We were lucky for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was a Sergeant First Class who had recognized me from the Sandbox. Grenades, like LAW rockets, were issued as rounds of ammo and sometimes the accounting left something to be desired. Hell, the Air Force hauled 6 nuclear tipped missiles to Barksdale a few years back. And, that was despite the fact that a soldier was required to count for every round of ammo issued. They issue you 210 rounds of 5.56; you'd better turn in 210 rounds of 5.56 or be able to account for shooting them up.

Feral: (adj) wild, untamed, especially of domesticated animals having returned to the wild; (noun) a contemptible (young) person, a lout.

We'd seen feral man, could feral animals be long in coming? Actually, yes, as long as there was a sizeable human presence, feral animals would be limited to pets looking for food. As long as houses were standing and people were living in them, mice and rats

wouldn't go feral. Some pets might be turned loose to fend for themselves. Where pets were left behind, dogs and cats might find a way to escape a house and the dogs would probably eat the cats. Then they'd go shopping for targets of opportunity to fill their bellies. All the more reason to go armed in a PAW.

One thing we lacked was good communications. We'd looked at the GMRS/FRS radios at Radio Shack but didn't believe they had the range they claimed. We took some anyway the day we got the security system and tried them out. We could barely reach from the house to the property line ¼ mile away. But, Don had other radios so we went back to look. It was used equipment made by Motorola. He had mobiles and handheld radios, the CM300 and CP200. The portables, CP200s, were 16 channel 5w VHF units and the mobile units were 32 channel 25/45w VHF units. The vehicle antennas had a 3db gain and the portables a Heliflex antenna. Don was open today and gave us good prices for paying in gold and silver. He told us he'd been looted and they'd taken a security system and some GMRS/FRS radios. It was hard to keep a straight face but we weren't sure how he'd react if we told him we'd done it.

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The Sergeant showed up a few days later for coffee and a visit.

"Do you know who looted the Radio Shack?"

"Why would you ask us?"

"I saw your security system and it's a Radio Shack exclusive. It occurred to me that you determined you needed a security system and couldn't find Don. All he wants is to be paid for the system and the radios. He said that \$500 would cover it."

"Okay, it was us. We can pay for the stuff but don't want to end up in jail or shot. In fact, we'd prefer he not know that it was us."

"You come up with the gold or silver and I'll be your go-between and he'll never know who borrowed the equipment. That's what you did, right? You borrowed the equipment."

"Right. How much is gold going for?"

"How much did he allow you when you bought the equipment?"

"\$1,500 an ounce."

"That's ⅓ of an ounce. How will you do that?"

"How about we give 3 one-tenth ounce gold coins and make up the rest with silver?"

"What's silver worth?"

“About one-fiftieth the price of gold. Three tenths ounces of gold would make \$450 and with silver at \$25 an ounce, two ounces would bring it to exactly \$500.”

“Okay, dig it out and I’ll see that he gets it.”

“And, we’re not in trouble?”

“Just make sure the property is abandoned before you go helping yourselves. If you’re not sure, ask me and I’ll check it out for you. You survivalists get my goat. You probably have enough food for a year, you obviously have a lot of fuel and I know about your armory.”

“Wrong, we have enough food for about 3 years if we’re careful. We’re not hoarding because we bought it when it was readily available to anyone and we wouldn’t turn down someone needing a meal. Trying to support the town on the food we have stored would go through it in a New York minute and we end up starving too. It’s not a crime or a sin to be prepared. We have shared what we’ve grown with the folks in town to the extent we were able. We’ve been accused of having a bomb shelter, generator, a jillion gallons of fuel, two tons of food and an armory to die for.”

“Just be careful who you let see those improved flashhiders, grenades and rockets.”

“There you go Sergeant, three tenths of gold and two ounces of silver. Care to stay for dinner?”

“I’d better get back to town and give this to Don, maybe another time.”

“What are you guys eating?”

“Those meal trays. Not the best, but it’s edible. T-Rations consist of semi-perishable foods that include a variety of fully cooked tray pack entrees, vegetables, desserts and starches. The tray pack container serves as a packing, heating and serving container. There are 10 breakfast and 10 lunch/dinner menus. The T-Ration Module contains everything needed to support the soldier, including the single service eating ware. Milk and bread are required to make the meal nutritionally adequate. The T-Ration may be further enhanced with dry cereal, fresh fruits, salad material and some condiments. The highly acceptable lunch/dinner menus include such entrees as chicken breast with gravy, hamburgers and turkey slices with gravy. Breakfast entrees include a variety of egg omelets, ham, pork sausage links and creamed ground beef. Research continues to produce improved breakfast components for the Breakfast T-Ration menus such as sausage patty with biscuit and chipped beef.

“The T-Ration Module has been unitized 18 meals per module rather than 36 meals to the module. Additionally, the modules still are unitized 12 modules to a pallet, but because the module is 18 meals versus 36 there are now only 216 meals per pallet. This



initiative is expected to reduce waste, prevent repetition in menus and make handling the module easier. More than 20 million T-Ration meals were shipped to support Operation Desert Shield/Storm, which made up about 11 percent of all rations shipped to the theater. About 98,000 T-Rations were served daily, which made up approximately 7 percent of the daily rations consumed. The beauty of the T-Ration continues to be simplicity, compact packaging and the minimum requirement for personnel and equipment to prepare the ration.”

“Call us on the radio when you plan to come out and we’ll thaw some steaks.”

“Thanks and by the way, my name is Randy Brown.”

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We got a call on the radio a couple of weeks later. Randy wanted to know if we could extend our offer to feed four. We told him, “Come on down.” I dug around and found a 750 ml bottle of JD and some mixes. We didn’t have lettuce for a salad but I picked out several large potatoes to bake, some canned mushrooms and 8 New York Strips. Just because it was TEOCAWKI didn’t mean we couldn’t enjoy a good meal.

“Something to drink?”

“Got a beer?”

“Sorry. How about some JD?”

“That’s even better. Hey guys, he has JD, how do you want it?”

I heard the three respond with rocks and Randy said why not? They had the same amenities we had, courtesy of an Army generator to power the High School Gym. We got to talking about food and we heard all kinds of things they missed, fried chicken being at the top of the list. I asked how large their contingent was and he said 26 National Guard and 26 regular military. I knew we had around 75 frozen chickens in the freezer and made a note to talk to Patty about it. How much trouble would it be to quarter 28 chickens and whip up some potato salad and macaroni salad? Use the 41 quart canner and deep fry the chicken. Some of these people had saved our butts and we weren’t about to run out of chicken anytime soon.

That bottle of JD didn’t last long so I dug out the other bottle in case someone wanted another drink. They passed, saying they could always be called up to handle a firefight somewhere in the County. That explained why they brought their rifles and MOLLE gear and were driving the Mk 19 equipped Hummer. We got the steaks done to order and smothered in mushrooms. We even had real butter for the baked potatoes and a day old loaf of French bread that we turned into garlic cheese bread.

Later, I discussed what they said with Patty. Even if we included the military, we'd only have 52 people plus ourselves. I suggested that we could certainly spare 28 chickens for a good cause. We had enough oil for the canner and could fry the chicken in batches, keeping it hot in the oven. She wanted to know I planned this picnic and I suggested Independence Day. We should have watermelon and sweet corn to go with the chicken. I said if we cooked  $\frac{1}{4}$  chicken per soldier, there should be more than enough. We had enough potatoes to make a huge bowl of potato salad and another of macaroni salad.

She agreed that it might be in our best interests to get on the good side of the Guard and military, we might need them to save our butts again. If that took a 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic, so be it. I figured we couldn't really have a real picnic without a keg of beer and finding one would take some doing. Most every town had at least one beer joint (tavern) although not all of them sold hard liquor. John and I started a search of the taverns in the small towns. We found two full kegs and a manual pump in a tavern on the south side of Minburn, Mudder's.

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You have to ask yourself if we were important to the recovery of the country, we were only farmers, after all. Well... there wasn't electricity in most locations due to the war. Most foods are processed using electricity. A study was done by the EMP Commission back in 2008 and they said that without electricity, most folks in the country would starve. They went further and pointed out that most of the world depends on the US for food.

Maybe I'm being egotistical, but I think we're very important to the recovery of the country in our own small way. In 1900, 39% of the US population was farmers. In 2008, 2% of population was farmers and we produced enough food to provide 52% of the worldwide food exports. Sure, we imported food, like Jasmine rice from Thailand, big deal. We grew a lot of rice in Arkansas, California and Louisiana too, but couldn't process it without electricity. People would end up eating brown rice for a while, but it was healthier anyway. The problem with brown rice was the oil in the bran layer making it harder to store.

Absent rice seed, that was one crop we weren't going to grow. Our climate wasn't that different from the Sacramento Valley, so if we would have had the seed, we could have done it. Rather than planting all soybeans this year, we planted half and half soybeans and great northern beans; a semi-vining 24 inch plant yielding a prolific quantity of flat 5 inch pods holding 5 to 6 large white beans. We were just doing our part and the beans sold better than soybeans. We sold half of the corn to be made into corn meal. It was a shame about the rice; the combination would have provided a complete diet.

## Just in Time – Chapter 6

I'd read some of TOM's stories on Frugal's and sent him an e-mail to get his spreadsheet. There was a man who was all in favor of the beans and rice diet. He didn't have any dent corn, but he did have 75-pounds of popcorn he could grind up. He also liked the M1A made by Springfield Armory, so he couldn't be all bad. He had the same Mossberg but went with the Taurus rather than the P-14. It seems to me he said in one of his stories that he had small hands so maybe he couldn't hold a P-14. You never had to wonder where he came up with ideas, he posted the links. His favorite scenario was WW III; did he know something the rest of us didn't? Could be, he said he had over ½ MILLION files on his computer.

[Closer to 600,000 – pick a subject. All those files I lost when my computer was hit by lightning? Sent the drive to a guy who recovered them for me. Thank you Jesus.]

I don't know how many pods constituted a prolific quantity, but I do know where we got the seed, we planted several bags of great northern beans. Did you do that in grade school? Plant an ordinary bean and watch it grow? We did and every one we planted grew. Anyway, were expected a yield of about 2,200-pounds per acre and planted 35 of the 70 acre bean field in great northern beans. We came close, too, getting 38 tons of beans. We sold them in twenty five-pound bags as fast as we could package them at \$20 a bag.

We weren't gouging, we could have charged more but I looked up the Walton Feed price list on my computer and added the same \$5 you would have had to pay for shipping.

We didn't have a large mill to grind the corn so we sold it loose and let the buyer grind it. Now, if we could get to Aurora, Nebraska we might be able to get a Meadows Steel Burr Grinders from Pleasant Hill Grain. The mill could grind 7 lbs/minute of whole wheat flour or 8 lbs/minute of corn meal. Aurora was about half way between Lincoln and Grand Island. If we wanted to risk going through Omaha and Lincoln, it was about 280 miles. Better wait until late fall to make that trip.

We weren't rolling in money by any means, but 38 tons of beans at \$20 per 25-pound bag yielded around sixty grand after you discounted the bags we gave away to people who didn't have even \$20 and had families to feed. We're God fearing Christians here, but there's a limit to that turn the check and taking care of you brother stuff. Anyone willing to help out on the farm was paid in food and it included enough to get them through winter and then some.

Of course, not everybody was willing to work so we were reluctant to give them much help. There were also a few like the guys that the Guard killed who would prefer to steal than put in an honest day's work mucking out stalls or whatever chores we could come up with. The next time that happened we were better prepared and Patty was on the radio to the Guard before they made it to our gate. With cabinet in the living room, it only

took a minute to get what we needed to be ready for them. I even grabbed the Tac-50 and loaded a magazine of Mk211, just in case.

“Help you?”

“We’re looking for food.”

“We have a little, how do you propose to pay for it, gold, silver or work it off?”

“We were thinking you might just give us some like you did a few others in town.”

“Some of them worked it off and you don’t look like charity cases to me; sorry, no sale.”

“How much are you charging?”

“\$20 for a 25 pound bag of beans and \$15 for a 25-pound bag of corn; canned goods that we can spare are \$1 to \$2 a quart, depending on what it is.”

“I don’t think so, that way too steep.”

“Have it your way. See you later.”

“The hell you say,” he said pulling a pistol.

Pop. Don’t you just love those suppressors? They began piling into the truck and my anger got the better of me, I fired a string of 3 shots from the Tac-50 destroying the pickup’s engine. The second pickup was trying to backup as fast as it could, but backing up at high speed isn’t the easiest thing to do. Three more rounds brought a stop to that. Patty and Phyllis stepped out holding their rifles and we were close to being evenly matched.

One of the men raised a rifle and I heard another pop and John brought him down; two down and seven to go. The rear truck exploded when a 40mm grenade from the Mk 19 hit it and they threw down their guns. The Guard fellas weren’t too gentle slapping on the cable ties.

“You guys just can’t seem to stay out of trouble, can you?”

“They came to us Randy. Weren’t willing to work for food and I told them to be on their way.”

“Is that dog getting big enough to be a guard dog?”

“I’ve been trying to teach him to heel, without much success.”

“Let me take him and I’ll have our K-9 guy work with him.”

“Okay, but don’t tell Cheryl.”

“When the dog is ready you can come in and get trained to use a working dog.”

“Thanks. Are we okay on this attack?”

“You didn’t have to destroy their pickup but yeah, you’re okay.”

“I only blew up the engines; you blew up a whole truck.”

“Use some of the .50 cal?”

“Works better than I thought. Put three rounds in each engine block.”

“We’ll get a tow truck to pick them up; we may be able to salvage something.”

“Do you know where Aurora, Nebraska is?”

“Nope.”

“It’s on I-80 about halfway between Lincoln and Grand Island.”

“So?”

“There a company there that sells small commercial grain mills. Any chance a Nebraska unit could pick one up and get it to Council Bluffs or further east?”

“I can ask; no promises.”

“If you can, the name of the company is Pleasant Hill Grain. We’d be interested in getting the one that grinds 7 lbs/minute of whole wheat flour or 8 lbs/minute of corn meal. Make it easier on everyone if we had one.”

“You can pay?”

“We can pay any reasonable price. Hey don’t forget, all the Guard troops and military are invited for an Independence Day picnic. We’re serving fried chicken, potato salad, macaroni salad, sweet corn and watermelon and I’ve got a full keg of beer.”

I conclude that Randy must have tried very hard to get that grinder, we had it two weeks later and it was free. We were coming up on Independence Day and the corn and bean crops looked good. It looked like we’d have a bonus year of alfalfa. The mules, whose names were Fred and Ethel, were being used to pull wagons, lest they forget their training. We had 6 horses now, one for everyone, three mares, one filly, one gelding and one stallion.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, we started out early, picking and icing down several of the small watermelons, picking 10 dozen ears of sweet corn, cutting up chicken into quarters and making huge batches of macaroni and potato salad. The keg of beer was iced down in a wash-tub. Six loaves of French bread had been cut up and drenched in garlic butter and cheese, ready to go on the grill.

They started to arrive around noon and by 1pm, the chicken was done and we were ready to eat. I took the last of the garlic bread off the grill and sat down to the fried chicken. We were hoping they brought their appetites, there were 2 ears of corn, ½ chicken and a cup each of macaroni and potato salad for each person plus about 1½ slices of garlic cheese bread and ¼ of a small watermelon. Sorry, no green bean casserole or coleslaw.

The first thing we ran out of was, of course, beer. It would take a while for the second keg to get cold but as soon a lunch was over we got it and added more ice to the wash-tub. There weren't any leftovers, just a lot of smiling faces. We should have made more of the garlic cheese bread too, at least another 3 loaves.

Most of the soldiers wanted a tour of our aboveground shelter and to see our weapons collection. We showed them the entire arsenal, hiding nothing. They were a bit surprised at some of the things we had, especially the Tac-50 and the A-MAX and Mk211 ammo. They'd never used a LAW but knew what it was. The Mike 61 grenades were obsolete, they said.

"They might be obsolete, but they still go bang. They put out a nasty hail of ¾" pieces of piano wire. The only thing we'd like to have that we're missing is the Mk3A2 concussion grenades."

Eventually the beer was cold enough to drink and we probably drank about half of the second keg. It started to get late and they headed back to Perry. Three days later Randy was back. All the soldiers wanted to thank us for the wonderful 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic and they got together and agreed to supply us a few things. The first thing was 4 dozen Mike 67s so we could have some real grenades and the second was 24 Mk3A2 concussion grenades. Randy explained that their use was almost exclusively limited to combat since they were an offensive grenades rather than a defensive grenade. The Mk3A2 was no longer manufactured and was being phased out. The primary user had been the US Coast Guard who used them as Anti-Swimmer Grenades along with Mk 40 grenades.

Apparently they were fond of us for two reasons, the good food of course, but perhaps more importantly, we didn't sit on our hands waiting to be rescued. The first time we'd held fire just a little too long, but the second time, we'd stopped the vehicles cold and taken out some of the bad guys, leaving them with mostly a cleanup operation. If more people displayed our attitude, their life would be much easier. All this was according to Randy as he explained the gifts. He went on to say that once law and order were totally

restored, he intended to pick up any remaining Mike 67s, Mk3A2s and those 6 cans of Mk211, or any that remained. He wasn't responsible for the Mike 72s or Mike 61s but he suggested that we'd better not get caught with them, citing the National Firearms Act.

"That's easy; we'll shoot up his Raufoss and use his grenades. We can cache the ones I got for you."

"Well, don't bury it too deep, we may need it yet."

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With the new grinder, we were turning out corn meal and packaging it in the same 25-pound bags we used for the beans. It only took about 3 minutes to grind up a 25-pound bag and we were producing right at 125 bags a day on the days we set up the grinder. One acre of corn would easily produce 4-5 tons of cornmeal. Not many people eat grits in Iowa, so we didn't grind them.

Since we had a lot of pinto beans and liked Mexican food, Patty decided to make masa. Nixtamalization typically refers to a process for the preparation of corn in which the grain is soaked and cooked in limewater, and hulled. Then you grind it up into flour and use it to make corn tortillas. It was a lot of work hulling the cooked and soaked corn, but Phyllis, John and I helped. She did one bushel of corn and I suppose we ended up with about 50-pounds of masa.

The next day, the corn was dry enough to grind. Fortunately, we had a tortilla press that could make any size up to 11". We made corn tortillas about 7" across and flour tortillas about 11" across. A pot of pinto beans had been simmering most of the day and she mashed them in a little of the liquid and fried them in a little lard until they were almost dry to make refried beans. She browned ground beef and seasoned it with a Lowry's mix for the beef portion of the meal. Phyllis diced tomato while Patty shredded the lettuce and coarse grated some cheese. It all went on the table and we had a regular feast.

I found that I usually wrote in my journal just before I went to bed. If I put it off, I might forget something and it helped remind me of this I thought of to do during the day. It was mostly a summary of important things or things that left an impression, like me eating 2 large burritos and 6 tacos. Every time we ate at Taco Bell, I grabbed 2 or 3 handfuls of their mild taco sauce because it was about as good as it comes. We had one of those large plastic tubs filled with those little packets. With the amount of left over masa, we'd be eating tacos for a while.

We were butchering one beef and two hogs every fall but since we couldn't buy bacon and hams, I decided to increase that to 3 hogs and have the loins from the 3<sup>rd</sup> hog smoked as Canadian style bacon and the picnic, hams and pork belly brined and smoked. The rest of the hog would be ground into sausage. It wasn't quite time to butcher yet, we were still finishing up canning the garden. Man, did we have a mess of

spuds; you can grow 18-19 tons of spuds on one acre. Don't tell those Army boys, but we fed them early field corn instead of sweet corn. When the field corn is in the milky stage, there isn't much difference and we didn't plant enough sweet corn. But, you have to get it early, just after ears firm up.

The old goal was to have corn knee high by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. These days, if it was only knee high by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, you were either looking at a very late planting or some kind of crop failure. The minute the ground was warm enough, we planted. How did we know the ground was warm enough? Have you ever heard of a thermometer? It's a neat little gadget, measures temperature. I know that's probably too high tech for some people, but that what John and I did.

Right after the war, we had a cold spell followed by a hot and dry spell. Must be that nuclear winter they talk about. We located about 42°N, but I don't really know how that related to the long term weather. Generally it's pretty good in this part of the state. And, a word about Randy, he's a walking contradiction. He supplies us with MK211, Mike 67s and Mk3A2s and in the next breath tells us not to get caught with them. The Guard and the military constitute most of the police force in the area so I think he's more worried about those things being tied back to him than our being caught with them. He didn't say much when we shot out the engines of those pickups. When you really think about it, nothing he gave us had a serial number, hence couldn't be traced.

I hoped we wouldn't need to use any of those things, but, being a successful farmer in a PAW doomed us to using them several times. At least the Guard and military had cut their response time. One example was when one of those mega cab pickups pulled up in front and disgorged 6 from the interior and 6 more from the back. We saw them coming and were ready when they piled out. This time Phyllis and Patty had to lend a hand.

"Get their engine and switch to your .30 cal."

"Screw that, I'm just going to use a LAWs and take out the truck and as many passengers as I can."

My aim wasn't the best and I ended up hitting the pickup right behind the back door. Kaboom, it went up in a flash, I must have hit the fuel tank. It also took down 4 of the guys who were hiding behind the pickup. Meanwhile, John had managed to hit another 4 of them and put them down, dead or wounded. Phyllis and Patty joined us saying that the Calvary was on the way and then opened up with their 556s.

That firefight lasted about 60 seconds, but I'm sure it would have taken longer without the rocket. By the time the Calvary arrived, any wounded had succumbed to their wounds, perhaps with a little help. No head shots, so no one could say for sure what had caused their deaths. Randy was incredulous.

"This is your fault Jed."



“What do mean by that?”

“You sell food to some and give it to others. Some people just figure you owe them food too.”

“I beg to differ with you on that. We do not give away food. Form of payment varies, however. Some don't have the resources to pay for the food, but they have strong backs. We give them the food and they pay for it by working it off. I got the idea from a patriot fiction story.”

“That crackpot in California?”

“No, the guy up near Reno. Not only do they earn food for working, we feed them while they're here so they don't have to use up the supplies they're working off. When we don't have any work, we take IOUs for work when we have it. Say, what are you doing with all of the vehicles that we've destroyed?”

“They're lined up in front of the Hotel Pattee with little signs indicating the method of destruction. The first two said Mk211 and the one we hit with the Mk19 had a second sign saying Mk19, 40mm grenade. What sign do we put on this one, 40mm grenade?”

“Oh hell no. Put M72 LAW on that sign!”

Another example was an attack that almost got us killed. Were it not for Shep pointing his nose at the back field and issuing forth a low growl, they may well have succeeded in sneaking up on us. This time, there were only five, four men and one woman. They were like the many before them who didn't have the common decency to ask for a handout. We always had a little extra to spare, provided we were asked and we got something in return.

Shep ran to the gate blocking the lane to the fields, hair standing up, lips pulled back. This was a perfect excuse to test the Tac-50, take them out before they got too close. I'm no Carlos Hathcock; it took two magazines of A-MAX to bring them all down. I almost didn't shoot the woman who I could see clearly in my scope. She had a M1 Garand and knew how to use it. When she kicked up gravel close to me, I took her down with a single shot, center mass.

Most of them took 2 shots and one particularly well hunkered down guy took 3. We recovered the Garand, two Winchester model 70s, one in .270 and the other in .308, a Marlin 1895 Cowboy in .45-70 and a Mini-14. Only two of them had handguns, both SP101s in .357 magnum. One was relatively new with a 2" barrel and Crimson Trace grips. The other one was older with plain grips and a 3" barrel. We didn't have any .357 magnum ammo beyond what they had; we'd need to go shopping. We called the Guard to pick up the bodies and explained that as far as we were concerned, their weapons were, once again, the spoils of war.

“It’s getting so I can drive here in my sleep.”

“If you’d post a few guards, we wouldn’t have this problem.”

“Sure you would, it would just be my guys instead of you people doing the shooting.”

“I shot up a full magazine of A-MAX, keep that in mind.”

“Which gun was the woman carrying?”

“The Garand.”

“.30-06 or .308?”

“.30-06. I’ll have to shop around for some of that Greek ammo. We need some .357 magnum too; for the handguns we recovered.”

“That’s quite the assortment of rifles, no two alike and/or the same caliber.”

“That Winchester model 70 in .308 might make a good sniper rifle if it had a scope.”

“That .270 would also be a good sniper rifle. It’s a long range cartridge that shoots very flat.”

“We don’t have scopes for either rifle, but they’re drilled and tapped for scope mounts.”

“There are about 4 or 5 different rear mounts for a model 70. It would be best if you took the rifle to someone who has mounts and get them to fit them.”

“The next problem would be finding good scopes.”

“How about Unertl MST-100 10x fixed day scopes? We have a few of the Marine scopes from the M40s. Someone screwed up a shipment and we ended up with them; before we had a chance to return them, TSHTF.”

“Somebody got handed his butt on a plate, those scopes are worth around \$2,500 each.”

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All of the .30-06 Grand ammo the Army had was provided to the DCM (CMP) and about all you saw on the web before the war was the Greek surplus military ammo. You could get the empty enbloc clips and load them with commercial ammo, provided you could find that. Surely, I thought, someone must have some standard M1 Garand ammo. In the days leading up to the war, the CMP limited sales of .30-06 ammo trying to preserve

their supply. They didn't count on all the preppers who had Garand rifles and they sold out well before the war.

Absent a good means of communication, we lacked the choices of pre-war days and couldn't surf the web for Greek .30-06 surplus. The Greeks packed the enbloc clips in bandoleers, 192 rounds per case and in 20 round boxes, without the enbloc clips, 12 boxes per spam can. We drove to Des Moines to the only place we thought we might find surplus .30-06 ammo, Jack Smith's. He had five cases of the Greek surplus in the bandoleers and 10 cases of the 20 round boxes. Fortunately, he also had empty enbloc clips so we could load up more ammo for the Garand.

His store was locked up, but had the lights on. We knocked and waited until he came to the door, shotgun in hand and peered through what turned out to be bulletproof Lexan. I guess he must have recognized John or me because he let us in. We told what we wanted and learned that it was our lucky day. He had Greek surplus and plenty of .357.

The first five cases cost two one-ounce Gold Eagles. The other ten cost two and one half ounces of gold. After we bought the empty enbloc clips, we were out 6 ounces of gold, per the law of supply and demand. We were happy to have it, even though the rifle would only serve as a backup to our other weapons. With the ammo, it would be a very good trade item. We just had to be careful who we traded it too. BTW, she had two bandoleers of 48 rounds each, with one clip removed and in the Garand. She had fired three shots and the third one gave her the range. The next one would have probably been right between my eyes.

So far we had successfully repelled intruders and hadn't had to resort to hiding out in the shelter. Both John and I were afraid that the time might come when a platoon sized group attacked and had the wherewithal to take us out. For this reason, we practiced evacuations to the shelter. Most times it was hard for attackers on the road to hurt us because of the sandbags stacked up on the front porch. This last attack, across the fields gave us pause to stop and rethink the what ifs.

"What are we going to do about the contents of that cabinet? I sure wouldn't want that stuff to fall in the wrong hands."

"We could move it back to the shelter and only store a small number of grenades and rockets. We can load up enough magazines with Mk211 to fight off a large force. We can move it to the shelter, too."

"How many rockets are you going to keep in the house?"

"I think we'll keep four, the rest of the carton and lock them in the hall closet with two dozen grenades."

"What about the 40mm?"

“Shotgun shells and flechettes for when they get too close.”

The M576 is a canister round filled with twenty 00 buckshot and was devastating at close ranges. We had the HE, the HEDP, smoke and the para illum rounds that we hadn't had to use, yet. There were problems with the flechettes because if they hit someone, they passed right through without causing much damage and on the way to the target, they could be deflected by something as small as a raindrop.

We spend most of a day rearranging things; moving the cabinet back to the shelter, sorting out what we'd leave out and what went back to the shelter, etc. Over dinner we discussed next year's crops. The 140 acres would be divided up into 4 crops, corn, oats, beans and wheat. One acre of wheat will produce enough flour to feed 9,000 people for one day. Thirty-five acres of wheat would produce 315,000 man-days of flour. Another way of looking at it was flour for 863 people for one year.

“We have the oat roller and can roll the oats. We can use the grinder that Randy got us to grind the corn and wheat. We'll grind some of the corn and other grains together for livestock food.”

“You'd better add some oats to your feed, that's way too many bushels to roll with a hand cranked machine.”

“We can do that, but rolled oats will sell well.”

“Not when you consider that it takes 80 turns of the handle to yield 110 grams of oat flakes. It's not you doing the cranking.”

Between our cornmeal, our flour, the beans and oatmeal, I was confident we could feed everyone in Perry for part of the year. We weren't the only people farming, so we couldn't be expected to feed everyone for a full year. It is said that one farmer fed about 140 people, but we could beat that. Someone was going to have to go to Arkansas, Louisiana or Sacramento for rice, though.

“If it were me, I'd change the crop mix.”

“What would you do John?”

“Do 10 acres of oats, 20 acres of soybeans, 40 acres of corn, 40 acres of beans and 30 acres of wheat. That would give you all five crops and Patty wouldn't have to worry about how many rolled oats she'll have to crank out.”

“Same large garden?”

“If we can get the jars and lids, yes.”

The problem with the oats roller was that it only held a cup of oats plus took 80 revolutions of the crank to produce what amounted to just under 4 ounces of oatmeal. Were we to produce Scottish oatmeal we could do it in no time at all because it's ground not rolled.

**Rolled oats:** These are oat groats that are steamed, rolled, and flaked so that they cook quickly. They're often cooked as a breakfast cereal, added raw to granola or muesli mixes, or used to make oatmeal cookies. Regular rolled oats take about five minutes to cook. If you're in a hurry, try quick oats or instant oats. These have thinner flakes, so they cook faster.

**Scottish oats:** These are groats that have been chopped into small pieces. They're chewier than rolled oats, and grain aficionados often prefer them for hot oatmeal cereals and muesli.

With the grinder, we could turn all of the oats we wanted into Scottish oats in a very short time. People would just have to get used to not having rolled oats. We were uniformly agreed to make few exceptions to what we planned to do. We were making some money but not getting rich feeding the people in Perry. Plus, growing food seemed to have become very risky.

## Just in Time – Epilog

Randy had turned me down when I suggested they provide protection, saying the only difference would be who was doing the shooting. They were spread pretty thin and having 4 rapid reaction forces on duty at all times hadn't helped much. They did respond rapidly, but when a battle only last 60 seconds, would it be rapidly enough? That very question had led to us reorganizing and putting the cabinet back in the shelter.

We decided to raise our prices slightly to offset the cost of ammunition. Most of it was Berdan primed and could be reloaded, but only with great difficulty. We saved the brass, just in case. Boxer primed was always better because of the ease of reloading. You most definitely didn't want anything corrosive lest you ruin your gun.

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Every year thereafter, we grew food and sold or bartered it off in Perry. Every year for a while and less frequently after, we fought off the bandits. We were able to expand our herds and they reopened part of the Oscar Mayer plant to do the butchering. We expanded our operation to include the adjacent 160 and thereby doubled our crops and had room for more livestock, eventually doubling and then tripling our herds. Three sows eventually became 30. Five cows became ten and then twenty, then fifty and finally more than 100.

We had to hire fulltime permanent help and had to annex the other 320 acres that made up the section. Those 320 acres were used for permanent pasture and a dry lot. With this size of an operation the profits finally started to pour in. John retired but he and Phyllis stayed on, to fight the good fight, he said.

I presumed that since things had settled down, Randy would be out to pick up the things he loaned us. They packed up one day, took off and we haven't seen them since. The dangerous items we had went into the shelter and were locked up in the cabinet. We had to leave the Mk211 out to have room for the other things. I downloaded my Tac-50 magazines to 4 rounds and my M1A magazines to 18 rounds. The only magazines I kept topped of were the ones for the P-14.

We reduced our practice sessions to quarterly to save on ammunition. I became more of a farm manager than a farm laborer. There were many people in need of food who lacked the ability to pay and they worked it off. We weren't stingy in that respect, feeding them while they worked, including whole families, and allowing them to keep what they earned. It seemed to me that we got more work from the people that way.

The kids, who earlier were 1½ and 6 months old, were now in their early teens. They pulled their weight when it came to working on the farm. Cheryl worked outside part of the day and inside for the remainder learning to cook and sew. We home schooled them in the three R's and I'd put them up against any public school student of the same age.

The subject that got emphasized was history. *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

We also emphasized the Boy Scout Motto, *Be Prepared*. When asked what to be prepared for, we replied, *Anything*. La Palma could fall into the ocean, Yellowstone could erupt in a Supervolcano, the Madrid Fault could have another massive earthquake and a tornado was always on the horizon. We could have a pandemic and frankly, I was surprised we didn't. Take your pick, but remember bad things always happen in threes.

"But, Dad we had more than 3 bad things happen."

"True, but after 3 comes 9. They don't have to happen all at once you know. That's why when I go riding I have the Marlin 1895 Cowboy and my Ruger Vaquero. They might be old style guns, but they're reliable. We're not quite there on the 9, so we have to be ever vigilant."

"What are you worried about, Mars invading or WW IV?"

"Yep. I don't know what or when, but it is not at question. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen"

"Why don't we go to church more?"

"It was too risky right after the war and we didn't really dare to leave the farm abandoned after. However, you're getting close to the age where you begin your studies to join the Methodist Church."

"Do we have to become Methodists?"

"No you don't. It's what my family was and what your mother's family was. You can join any Christian Church you wish."

"Are we limited to Christian?"

"Only as long as you're living under our roof. Your mother and I still have some say about goes on in our home. Besides, being a Methodist is pretty bland. As I understand it, a few generations back, my family attended the Lutheran Church."

"Why did they change?"

"My great grandfather moved to a town where the only two churches were the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church, so they converted to Methodist. Back in those days, some people were dead set against Catholics. Now it's just another Christian Church, as far as I am concerned. Check it out if you want but I don't believe you'll like it. I can say that because I believe that I know you. You should probably check out other churches while you're at it and decide for yourselves."

“Are these the End Days?”

“Where did you hear that?”

“I got it out of a history book.”

“I don’t believe they are; no one is fighting on the Plain of Megiddo.”

“Where’s that?”

“The Jezreel Valley in the Middle East. The final battle will be the Battle of Armageddon which occurs on the Plain of Megiddo in the Jezreel Valley below the hill (har) named Megiddo.”

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I can’t tell you how we ended up discussing the Battle of Armageddon. One has to wonder if there were enough evil people left alive in the world to produce the forces necessary for the final battle between good and evil. Just because a nation may have evil leaders doesn’t make the people of the nation evil. Assuming they had a choice, of course. That’s not always the case which brings me full circle to Russia. Did the people of Russia really have a choice? It seemed evident in the final days before the war that Putin remained in power.

And what, you may ask became of Barak Obama?

“He’s out of office now and did his best to get the country started on the path to rebuilding. There was only so much he could do, he couldn’t simply print money; and, if he had, no one would accept it. The best he could do was to get the military to help with the cleanup and the Corps of Engineers helping the rebuild process. It would take years and by the time he served two terms there was still a lot to be done. One auto manufacturer was up and running and they made one model of pickup and one model of car, sort of like old Henry Ford had done a century earlier. The engines were, in relative terms, economical, they had either a diesel engine or a gasoline flex fuel engine available. The diesels far outsold the gas engines.

Seven years after the war, power was restored and telephone service came within a year. We had rebuilt both generators once and had my generator in the shop for its second rebuild. Both tractors had their engines rebuilt and was it ever hard finding parts! We used the mules to pull wagons and during the Independence Day parade. Our firearms continued to be kept handy, just like I told the kids. I’d saddle up and check on the herd daily, always wearing the Vaquero and carrying the Marlin in my scabbard. The .45-70 cartridge was sort oddball in modern times and when I happened upon a supply I bought them out. It was a fun gun to shoot and I used the 405gr bullets from Buffalo Bore.



That's our story, believe it or not. The key to our survival had been preparedness and not having a nuke fall on our shelter. There were no FEMA Camps that I know of. A lot of people died after the war from war related causes and just plain bullet wounds. We didn't take the other  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the section, we paid for it, or perhaps you could say that the people of Perry paid for it by buying our production.

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